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HISTORY OF WICKEN



M. KNOWLES

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HISTORY OF WICKEN



South-east View of Wicken Parish Church : Dedicated to St. Lawrence.

HISTORY OF WICKEN

BY
M. KNOWLES

LONDON
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1902

Br 5245.25



*Gift of
William Endicott, Jr.*

PREFACE

I N these days of advanced learning, days of educational advantages enjoyed by such a limited portion of the community in the early part of the century, one of whom (as the writer must rank) should perforce send forth a humble apology for venturing to offer anything like the present literary effort. But having received from one, who has passed away to a better and brighter land than this Fenland plain—notes sent in all kindness to beguile the weariness and monotony of a life of restricted opportunities—the duty of bringing such efforts to fruition has assumed somewhat the proportions of a sacred trust. At any rate the writer asks the favour of the indulgent reader to overlook whatever there may lack in the form of literary construction, &c. And should those authorities from whence quotations have been drawn have not seemed sufficiently

acknowledged the writer would wish to do so now—Camden, Carter, Lysons, and the late Rev. John Bell, M.A., have all been resorted to ; also the late Professor Babington, F.R.S., &c.

The time cannot be far distant when writing and the things of time will soon to her be over, but she hopes and believes that this little HISTORY OF WICKEN may then afford an interest to those who know Wicken, or may wish to visit that portion of the Cambridgeshire Fenland.

M. K.

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CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?"

SCOTT.

HISTORIANS now speak of the Cambridgeshire Fenland as "the widest plain in Britain," the golden land of England "with its rich cornfields, fine orchards, and dairy farms. The traveller will note its breadth of view, its high o'erarching sky and beautiful 'cloud pictures.'"

To natives it will appeal as the memory of one's birthplace is bound to appeal to all those whose souls are not insensible to natural instincts, and especially to such as may be far away from their native land.

To those early associations will most surely crop up—the fields which had witnessed the boy's rambles, the trees he had climbed, the little boatings in the old Fen streams, the explorations, from the time when marsh marigolds lay about in inviting golden patches, till the flags of the rushes waved above the heads of the water-lilies,

which never look so beautiful out of their native element.

To the entomologist the sketch of primeval Fen (about two hundred acres) at Wicken will commend itself as a happy hunting ground for rare moths, butterflies, and other insects; to the botanist, its varied and rich flora.

The late Professor C. Cardale Babington, M.A., F.R.S., F.L.G., F.G.S., F.S.A., &c., spent a considerable portion of his valuable time among the flowers of Wicken Fen, and often boated over the Lode stream and "garden under the water," a list of whose discoveries, &c., will be found appended to this History, through the kindness of Mrs. Babington, and Messrs Miller and Skertchley.

With these considerations in advance, collected details should now begin.

Wicken, anciently called Wykes, or Wickham, is a small village, situate in the Eastern Division of the Cambridgeshire Fenland, four miles from Soham, its nearest railway station, six miles from Ely by the bank, about eight by turnpike, thirteen miles from Cambridge, and sixty-two from London.

The village lies just above the Fen proper, and is about three miles from the river Cam—a river so called, it is said, from its winding course. The willow grows bravely on its banks, and is

seen also in village gardens. It used to be a good source of industry at Ely for the manufacture of wicker-work, which was a flourishing trade at Ely in days gone by, and is used now in the "Arts and Crafts" industries. One willow holt at Upware is mentioned by Lysons in his *Magna Britannica* as existing in 1808. It existed long after in the writer's knowledge.

Wicken has decreased in population considerably of late years. In 1871 it numbered 1,132; in 1891, 716 only. Its acreage is 3,813.

The word "Fen" means dirt, and perhaps there is enough of the article still to justify its ancient character, but of late years considerable improvements have been made in the roads.

In our county of Cambridge we have about 70,000 acres of Fenland, a great portion of which is well drained and well farmed, and we hope the character of Cambridgeshire will continue to improve, for old geography books speak of it as famous for butter, for rheumatism and ague. Of the latter one never hears now. Good butter still abounds at the large farms, whether with modern inventions or without, and rheumatism is a very common complaint, but ague is quite a thing of the past.

And yet all this flat Fenland was once a beautiful forest covered with large oak-trees, in which our ancestors (at that time heathens and

savages) took refuge when the Romans invaded Britain just before the birth of Christ. It is said that the Romans drove them out by burning down the forests, and the poor Britons complained that their hands and bodies were worn out by the Romans in clearing the wood and embanking the Fens.

The Roman Emperor Severus caused a number of roads to be made at great expense across the Fens, one of which, from Denver to Peterborough, was twenty-four miles long. It was sixty feet broad, and three feet deep with stones and gravel. This road was subsequently covered with earth about five feet thick.

The low land, though damp, was not impassable, and the water flowed to the sea in regular channels.

William of Malmesbury, who lived about 1150, says: "The fenny lands are a perfect paradise, abounding with apple-trees and vines, some growing on poles, others spread along the ground."

In 1236, the day after Martinmas Day, and eight days after, the winds were so boisterous that the sea rose to a great height, and breaking in at Wisbech destroyed many people and cattle, together with several small boats. The same thing happened several times, so that at last the fruitful plain was covered with water full of fish

and waterfowl, and becoming stagnant was very hurtful to the inhabitants living near.

About 1436 a project was set on foot of draining the Fens, but it met with so much scorn and ridicule that it was given up. Even in 1634, when the Earl of Bedford undertook to drain the Fens on condition of receiving 95,000 acres for himself, he was greatly opposed, and it is said the great Cromwell became member for the county principally that he might oppose the plan in Parliament.

However, in 1664 a regular Company was formed, who still undertake the care and drainage of the Fens, and to this we must impute the increased healthiness of the people, and certainly many live to a great age in these parts. Now, too, abundant crops are raised where fish and wild ducks formerly lived. Some years ago one of the large oaks of the old British forest was to be seen in a beautiful specimen of the fallen tree in the late Mr. Layton Slack's Dolver Fen, about ten feet under the soil. Much more recently, from a similar source, some of these trees were found and converted into gate-posts belonging to a farm near. Discoveries have also been made of some very large deer horns, which had become fossilised from having remained so long underground, and beautiful coins bearing the name of the Roman Emperors have been found.

Sometime in the sixties a great increase of wealth was obtained in our Fens in coprolites, which are old sea-shells, remains of strange animals, teeth of large fish, and other creatures not now known. These were ground into powder, and being composed of phosphate of lime, which is necessary to fertilise our land, proved a source of riches—at that period, for as an industry in this parish it has long ceased to exist, a foreign importation being now substituted for it.

Writing of Wicken, about thirty years ago, Mrs. Francken says: "Yet many blessings still remain which the thrifty and industrious inhabitants are prompt to make use of. The land is very rich, but requires a great deal of labour, so that men, women, and children can always get work."

The turf once dug in Wicken Fen used to be one of the great comforts of a labourer's home, as well as of many a farm kitchen, whose clear fires seem to glow in one's memory still, for under the ruthless hand of change they are almost entirely superseded by coal fires and grates. Yet there is no lack of turf, for carts loaded with the article are often seen passing through the village. Burwell Fen supplies this commodity, which is brought in boats to Wicken Lode,¹ and there

¹ The meaning of "Lode" is a running vein of water.

stacked ready for removal. It is now much used for lighting and keeping in fires.

There has long been a good supply of excellent water in this parish. A time-honoured fountain in the centre of the village seemed almost inexhaustible, but being a long distance from many cottage homes the Parish Council caused to be erected two fresh pumps, east and west of the old one, which have proved a boon most acceptable and available to many of those who had borne the yoke so far before.

And here must come a somewhat divergent remark. The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, who is both a pleasant and prolific writer, has, however, had one or two words to say, about which we must take exception. In an article which appeared in *Chambers's Magazine* a few years ago on the Isle of Ely Fenland, he describes the natives as being very morose, and in consequence of the lack of good drinking water, he says people are driven to the public-houses for other beverages.

This is news indeed to the writer, whose knowledge of the Fens has extended from the twenties to the nineties, whose ancestors belonged to the Isle of Ely, and who has never heard such an imputation cast upon its waters before.

And, if a fact, how is it that the Blue Ribbon Army has flourished for so many years under such conditions, and what could the medical

profession be about not to warn us poor Fenlanders of the prevailing danger? Why are we not in the insanitary position which characterised Maidstone a few years ago?

Lastly, in what hands could the Rev. S. Baring-Gould have fallen when he made his investigations? However, he does justice to the exquisite flora which is found more particularly in the undrained portions of the Fenland. Meadowsweet is very abundant, likewise the pink valerian, wild mint and pink willow-herb, whilst by the water's edge the blue forget-me-not, the pale rose flowering rush and the arrow-head abound. On the waters the white lily lends its beauty side by side with the yellow, and many other flowers embroider the fair land, an appended list of which will be found farther on, for which we owe a debt of gratitude to the late Professor Babington.

But what does Kingsley say about the people? In describing a winter scene of long ago he remarks: "For though it sent men hurrying out into the storm to drive the cattle in from the Fen and lift the sheep out of the snow-wreaths—yet all knew that after the snow would come the keen frost and bright sun and cloudless blue sky, and the Fenman's yearly holiday, when, work being impossible, all gave themselves up to play, and swarmed upon the ice on skates and sledges, ran races township against township, or visited

old friends full forty miles away, and met faces everywhere as bright and ruddy as their own, cheered by the keen wind of that dry and bracing frost.

"Such was the Fenland, hard yet cheerful, rearing a race of hard and cheerful men, showing their power in old times in valiant fighting, and for many a century since in that valiant industry which has drained and embanked the land of the Girvii till it has become a very 'garden of the Lord.'"

This the testimony of Charles Kingsley, whose work will live when many another writer's has been relegated to the cellar or the furnace.

The Rev. S. Baring-Gould has, in another article on the Fens (which appeared some time ago in the *Daily Graphic*), mentioned the cultivation of the white poppy as having greatly prevailed in our midst, not as a floral decoration, but as a commodity for domestic use. The heads were dried and the seeds made into tea, which mothers were in the habit of giving to their infants for sleeping purposes, and frequently to keep them quiet during their own absence at field work. For women do work a good deal in the fields at Wicken and in the neighbourhood, where they get a shilling or more a day for hoeing and weeding, which they prefer to housework and washing and charring. But this habit of giving

to children poppy tea seems, as far as one can learn, to have died out. It came to an end in one family with a great shock. This is the story :—

A very industrious woman, the wife of a small allotment farmer and shopkeeper, had, in addition to several other children, twins—a boy and a girl—and wishing naturally for a night's rest after the labours of the day, an administration of the poppy tea duly took place and led to the following catastrophe :—

"We were four in a bed," she remarked to the writer, "and I used to give the boy the poppy tea one night and the girl the other."

Well, it not unnaturally occurred that one morning on awakening she found the boy looking unusually calm and still, and quite death-like. She sprang up in great alarm and called some of her older children to come to her, but the babe was dead, as medical evidence testified. An inquest followed, and death from poppy tea inadvertently given was the verdict. And said the poor old lady, an octogenarian, who passed away in 1898, "If I had had a hundred children I would never ha' given them any more poppy-head tea." The girl twin died about a year after from natural causes.

But the old man, her husband, adheres to the decoction whenever he can get it. He finds it a

most agreeable and powerful specific for a winter cough, which never fails to trouble him. But the white poppy is so little grown now that he was lamenting lately over the difficulty he finds in procuring a few heads—three or four of which used to serve for his decoction. It was better, he said, than any other mixture for his cough.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."
LONGFELLOW.

"WICKEN," says Lysons, "had, in ancient times, a market on Mondays, granted, in 1331, to Humphrey de Bassingbourn (and part of a market cross, inverted, is still to be seen on the first green of the east end of the village), together with a fair for three days at the Festival of St. Lawrence. The manor was anciently in the family of the Thorntons, from whom it passed by female heirs to the families of Colville, Gernon, and Peyton. Sir John Peyton, who died in 1393, married one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Sir John Gernon. Wicken was for many generations a seat of the Peytons of Isleham, of whom there are memorials in the parish church. Sir Henry Peyton, who lived in the time of the Civil War, was an active Parliamentarian; he published a pamphlet on the

imprisonment of the five members, and another, after the king's death, called "The Catastrophe of the House of Stuart." But prior to the execution of the king on July 12, 1644, we are told that Mr. Thomas Grimmer, parson of Wicken, had the following articles exhibited against him:—

"That he is a great observer of Bishop Wren's orders; that he is an enemy to all goodness, as well as to the Parliament, and is a great swearer and striker, &c. :

"Whereupon by Manchester's Warrant, dated August 30, 1644, he was ejected and sequestered."

Spinney Abbey (or as it was formerly called, Spinney Priory) is situate about a mile from the village of Wicken.

Foundation. Sir Hugh de Malabisse having, in the time of John, married Beatrix, Lady of the Manor of Wykes, they, in the beginning of Henry III.'s reign, built and endowed a priory of the order of Austin or Augustine. This manor, with the advowson of the priory, descended to Mary Thornton, who married Sir Humphrey de Bassingbourn, after whose decease she augmented the monastery with more lands for the maintenance of more canons, A.D. 1302. There were other benefactors to the house, which, however, being much run to decay both in its

revenues and buildings, was, A.D. 1449, perpetually united to the cathedral-monastery of Ely by Walter, Bishop of Norwich, with the leave of King Henry VI. and the consent of the patron, John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester. In the licence of King Henry VI. for giving this priory to William, the prior of the convent of Ely, the endowment is said to consist of four messuages, forty tenements, four lofes, ninety acres of land, forty acres of meadow, two hundred acres of pasture, another marsh called Jankyn's Fresh, and forty-two acres at Exning. To this were appropriated the church of St. Mary and St. Cross of Spinney, the parochial church of Wicken, and the manor of the same place.

Dedication. The dedication of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Cross.

WICKEN HOSPITAL.

Situation. Archdeaconry of Sudbury, deanery of Fordham, hundred of Stapelho.

Foundress. Mary, Lady Bassingbourn, widow of Sir Humphrey, and a great benefactress to Wicken Priory, A.D. 1321, made to that house a further donation of a messuage of lands in Wykes on condition that the prior and convent should constantly maintain in the said messuage seven aged men with the allowance of one farthing loaf of bread, one herring, and one

pennyworth of ale daily to each, and three ells of linen, one woollen garment, and one pair of shoes of the price of fivepence, and two hundred dry turves to each annually.

The right of nominating these poor men to the hospital rested with the prior and convent of Spinney.

The prior of Angle, in Cambridgeshire, of the Order of Austin Friars, is said to have possessed at the time of the Norwich taxation property in the parish of Wykes to the value of £1 13s. 3½d.

The convent of Spinney having originally been founded for three canons, but increased to seven by Mary de Bassingbourn (or Bassinghame), two of these canons were bound to celebrate Divine Service daily in the church of Wykes.

Valuation.

		£	s.	d.
Tax Eccles, 1291	{ Norwich Diocese ...	12	9	1½
	{ Ely Diocese ...	2	4	8
		14	13	9½
Valor Ecclesiasticus, A.D. 1534	...	92	12	3½

Granted to Sir Edward North, 1544 (see Taylor's *Index Monasticus or the Abbeyes*) Arms of East Anglia, three Coronets.

Lysons says :—

“After the Reformation the site of the priory



All that was left of the old Almshouses, built and endowed by Mary Lady Basingbourn, who lived in the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I. The above bit of ruin was pulled down in 1897 to make room for the Diamond Jubilee Cottages erected by the Parish Council in that year.

of Spinney and its manor in Wicken which had belonged to the canons as early as the reign of Henry VI. were granted in trust for Sir Edward North. Sir George Somerset died, seized of the priory estate, in the year 1559. About the middle of the following century it became the property of Henry Cromwell, sometime Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who, after the restoration of King Charles II., led a retired life at Spinney, until the time of his decease, which happened in 1673. He was buried in Wicken Church, where there are memorials for him and some others of the Cromwell family. King Charles II. is said to have visited Henry Cromwell in his retirement, when the sports of the field led him on some occasion into the neighbourhood of Spinney Abbey, and various traditionary anecdotes are current as to the circumstances of the visit." However, it is quite certain that the king wished him to enjoy his retirement in peace, and it is pleasant to be able to record an instance as agreeable as this in a life which cannot well be written of in terms of love and respect.

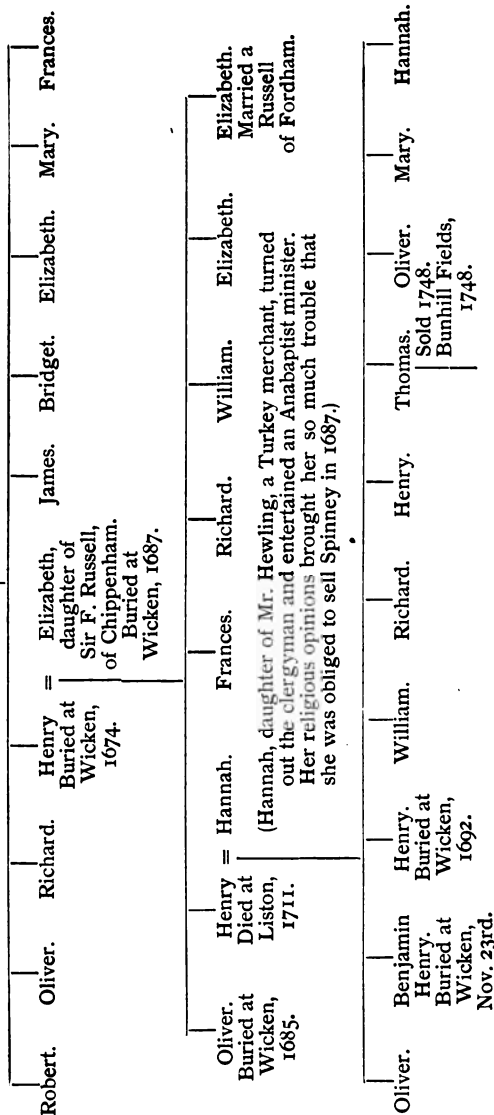
Henry Cromwell's son mortgaged the Spinney Abbey estate in the year 1687 to Philip Welbore. It was subsequently purchased by Edward Russel Earl of Orford. Afterwards it became by inheritance the property of the Duke of Somerset, subsequently that of the Earl of Aylesford, who

was impropiator of the great tithes of Wicken, and patron of the curacy.

But to return to Henry Cromwell.

In an old parish register at Wicken, was found the subjoined facts which concern the pedigree of Henry Cromwell. It is a true copy of the register as it came into the writer's hands. A few particulars which relate to the Cromwell family may be interesting, as through Henry (once Lord Deputy of Ireland) it has been a good deal associated with Wicken and Spinney. Oliver Lord Protector, descended from a Welsh family of the name of Williams, was born at Huntingdon April 25, 1599, and received his education under Dr. Beard, Master of the Free Grammar School there. He had one year of university life at Cambridge and subsequently was sent to London, where he studied law at Lincoln's Inn, during which time some historians tell us that he followed very dissolute habits. At twenty-one he was married at St. Giles's Cripplegate, to Elizabeth, a daughter of Sir James Bouchier of Felsted in Essex. His sons were sent to school there. Oliver followed the occupation of a farmer at St. Ives, Hunts, for four or five years. He afterwards removed to Ely and resided at the glebe-house near St. Mary's Church, having come into some property at Ely through the death of his uncle,

OLIVER = ELIZABETH.
 Died 1665.
 Sept. 1658. Buried at Norborough.*

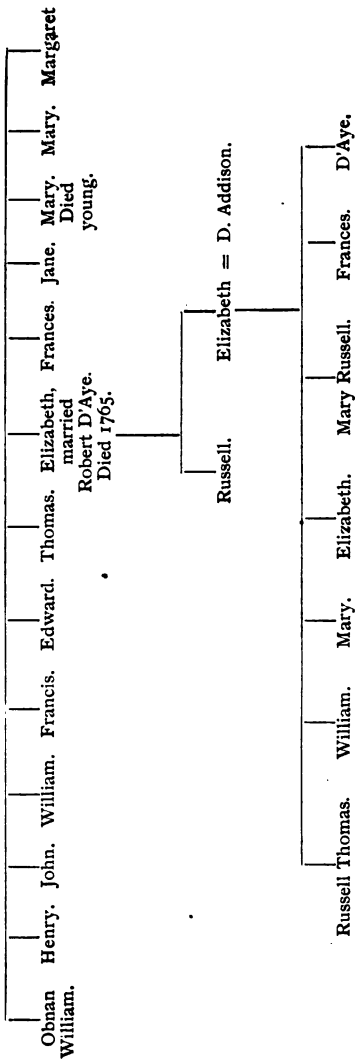


* Query according to other historians.

Henry Cromwell's only surviving daughter married to W. Russell, of Fordham.

ELIZABETH CROMWELL = W. RUSSELL.

Born 1660;
died 1711.



Sir Thomas Steward. He was at one time styled Lord of the Fens, and was most offensively arbitrary with respect to the manner in which the cathedral service was performed in Ely.

The late Rev. John Bell, Vicar of Fordham, gives the following account of his hostile behaviour on one occasion.

"In January, 1643, he wrote to the Rev. William Hitch, the Clergy-Vicar, to desire that he would give over the choir service as unedifying and offensive, and advised him to read, catechise, and expound the Scriptures, and have more frequent preaching than was customary, and this for fear the soldiers should tumultuously attempt a reformation; subjoining that he must answer for it if he did not reply; and as he did not choose to do this, both the soldiers and the rabble broke into the Cathedral during divine service, and Oliver, addressing himself to Mr. Hitch, said, 'I am a man under authority and am commanded to dismiss this assembly.' Mr. Hitch paused for a moment, and finding that Oliver and his rude followers proceeded to the Communion table, continued the service, at which Oliver returned with great displeasure, and laying his hand upon his sword, in a passion, bid the clergyman 'leave off his fooling,' and come down, and then drove the whole congregation from the Cathedral."

The "Lord of the Fens" would have been a little startled could the record afterwards have met his vision then.

"After the Restoration, the body of Cromwell, which had been interred with the greatest magnificence in Westminster Abbey, was by order of Charles the 2nd, together with those of Ireton and Bradshaw, dragged from its grave, and treated with indignity too horrible to relate." (See Butler.)

His wife Elizabeth was buried at Norborough, in Nottinghamshire, as mentioned in the Register, though some historians deny it.

CHILDREN OF THE ABOVE.

Robert died young.

Oliver killed in battle 1648.

Richard afterwards Protector.

Henry of Spinney.

James died young.

Bridget, married to Ireton and then to Fleetwood.

Elizabeth, married to Claypole, died August 6, 1658—Buried August 10th at Windsor.

Mary married to Fauconberg, afterwards to Rich.

Henry, the fourth son. Born at Huntingdon, 1627. Married in 1653, to a daughter of Sir F. Russell at Chippenham. Made Lord Lieutenant of

Ireland. Remained so till Oliver's death. Retired to Spinney Abbey, which brought him £522 annually, and died March 23, 1673, of a disease called calculus, and was buried two days afterwards within the communion rails of Wicken Church.

Over the stone is inscribed :—

Henrius Cromwell de Spinney, Obiit XXIII die Martij, Anno Christi, MDCLXXIII Anno Ætatis, XLVII.

He was a conformist to the Church of England, but befriended Dr. R. Parr, the ejected vicar of Chippenham. His wife Elizabeth died 1687, and was buried at Wicken.

Henry Cromwell had seven children.

1. Oliver, born in Dublin, died at Spinney Abbey and was buried in Wicken Church in 1685.

2. Henry, born in Dublin Castle. Died in 1658.

3. Francis, born at Chippenham 1663. Died in 1719.

4. Richard, born at Spinney Abbey, and baptized at Wicken, September 1665. Died in London.

5. William, born at Spinney Abbey, 1667. Died in the East Indies.

6. Elizabeth, born at Whitehall, 1654. Died at Chippenham, 1659.

7. Elizabeth, born at Chippenham, 1660. Married William Russell, Esq., of Fordham. The

family which sprang from this marriage (says the Rev. John Bell), "consisting of seven sons and six daughters, became greatly reduced in circumstances, from the extravagance of their parents. Their daughter Elizabeth married Mr. Robert D'Aye of Soham. A daughter of this Mr. D'Aye married Thomas Addison, an ancestor of the late William Addison, surgeon of that place"—practising there in the fifties, and before.

So much for the descendants of the great Cromwell who died at Whitehall, September 3, 1658, and was buried at Westminster, but whose body was at the Restoration exhumed and degraded in the manner already described.

Elizabeth his wife died 1665, and was buried at Norborough, in Nottinghamshire, as recorded in the register above. Two children of Henry Cromwell, named respectively Oliver and Elizabeth, having been buried in Wicken Church, may have led to the supposition already referred to. But under all circumstances one should be fair, and never lose an opportunity of saying a good word when possible. Hence the following remarks :—

The Rev. John Bell regarded Oliver Cromwell from the point of view of a churchman, and like the order to which he belonged, bitterly regretted the sacrilegious attacks made by Cromwell upon church edifices and church ceremonies.

To understand the Protector better, the reader would do well to study Carlyle's *Life of the man*. How, with all his mistakes, he made England a great power among nations, by opening out new commercial channels and enterprises, and how he even would have saved the king, had that monarch been wise enough to listen to his advice. For Cromwell knew His Majesty's position of danger, and the pitfalls by which he was surrounded. But Charles would not listen, and looking upon Cromwell as an enemy, made use of the following words which led to his destruction.

"He expects the gaiter, but he shall have the halter" (or words to the same effect). So in plain English the biter was bitten.

By the by this year of 1899, has been a very reawakening of Cromwell memories, and Cromwell virtues even. Cromwellian meetings, Cromwellian speeches have abounded — at one of which our most conspicuous, if not our greatest living orator sang his praises, speaking of him as a "practical mystic"; and quoting opinions as largely as a speech at a public meeting would admit of from great authorities.

"Lord Macaulay said of him, that he was the greatest prince that ever ruled England."

Another, that of Mr. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, who says: "It is time for us to regard him as he

really was with all his physical and moral audacity, with all his tenderness and spiritual yearnings, in the world of action what Shakespeare was in the world of thought, the greatest and most typical Englishman of all time."

And yet another—the testimony of Southey, the great Tory man of letters of his day—"That he was the lord of three kingdoms, and indisputably the most powerful potentate in Europe, and as certainly the greatest man of an age in which the race of great men was not confined to any country. No man was so worthy of the station which he filled."

But after all the most extraordinary testimony is that of Lord Rosebery himself, when he says :

"He was a practical mystic—the most formidable and terrible of all combinations. The man who derives inspiration from close communion with the supernatural and the celestial—the man who has that inspiration, and adds to it the energy of a mighty man of action—such a man as that lives in communion of a Sinai of his own, and he appears to come down to the world below, armed with less than the terror, and the decrees of the Almighty Himself."

Who can add another word to this ? Certainly not the present writer !

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

"As others see us."—BURNS.

AT Cambridge, in an old book probably by Lysons, may be seen an interesting account of a visit paid by Cosmo, Grand Duke of Tuscany, to Sir John and the Lady Frances Russell during his sojourn at Newmarket, at the time of the Spring races of 1669, when Charles II. and his brother the Duke of York were there. It was printed from a MS. in the Laurentian Library, Florence. The description, as follows, is somewhat quaint :—

"With a view of enjoying the beauty of the country during the fine weather, his Highness went with his attendants on the morning of the 10th from Newmarket to Chippenham, a country seat of Sir John Russell (of the family of the Earls of Bedford) who is married to my Lady Frances Cromwell, daughter of the late Protector Oliver Cromwell . . . In the lawn belonging to the Villa is a place set apart for bowles where his Highness and the Earl of Thomond played a few games, before viewing the mansion. His Highness

afterwards went over all the apartments, and found them handsomely furnished according to the custom of the country. Amongst other things which the house contains, the gallery which faces the south is not the least remarkable, for besides the view which it commands from the windows, there is upon the top an open promenade which, being connected with the roof of the house and covered with lead, affords on every side a prospect of the surrounding country. His Highness had the curiosity to ascend thither to view through a telescope the city of Ely, and its cathedral church, which is a most magnificent and conspicuous building. From the upper apartments his Highness descended to a spacious room on the ground floor, and there found the wife and sister of Sir J. Russell, the master of the house, who paid their compliments to him, to which his Highness replied with the greatest politeness, and seats having been prepared he sate down, and continued his conversation in the French language, with the Lady Cromwell giving her the place of honour. While they were thus engaged she presented her two children—one male, and the other female—to his Highness, who received them with great affability and kindness."

Now it would seem from the Register that there was marrying and intermarrying between the two Houses of Cromwell and Russell, for

Henry Cromwell, of Spinney, married a daughter of Sir F. Russell, of Chippenham, who was probably a relative of the Sir John Russell mentioned before as the husband of the Lady Frances Cromwell. Also it will be seen that Henry Cromwell's only surviving daughter, Elizabeth, married a Russell of Fordham. Viewing the situation in a political light it seems strange that the descendants of the originator of the Bedford Level Drainage System—who had found such a strong opponent in the head of the House of Cromwell mentioned before as going into Parliament in order to oppose the Bill—should ally themselves in marriage with the children of their ancient foe, for until recent times rival politicians and their families had held themselves very much apart. Now there are many instances to show that they meet in London society and in country houses very frequently. But this is a digression.

Richard Cromwell and Henry his brother both showed themselves the very opposites of their father in taste. The Protector loved political life and power, leaving no stone unturned by which to attain and keep it; the sons, when deprived of rank and station, contented themselves in humbler paths. Richard preserved a happy *incognito* abroad, Henry consoled himself in the quiet of Spinney Abbey, and in following the occupation of a farmer. But many instances

of opposite natures might be quoted as exhibited between parents and children, though we hear very much nowadays about the force of heredity, which probably evinces itself further down. It has already been stated that Spinney Abbey changed hands many times after Henry Cromwell and his descendants had ceased to be connected with it.

The manor house, now called Wicken Hall, and the manor property passed in 1800, by purchase, into the hands of John Rayner, Esq., who farmed the estate. The Rayners, as will be seen on a large tombstone on the south side of the church, had at that time belonged to Wicken for about a century, and probably longer. John Rayner, Lord of the Manor, married Miss Sarah Hatch, of Stuntney, near Ely, and died without issue. He left the property, which comprised several farms besides the Wicken Hall Estate and worth altogether about £70,000, to his widow (Mrs. Rayner), who bequeathed the greater portion of it to her sister, the late Miss Mary Hatch. A Mr. Fleetwood has stated in an article which appeared in the *Cambridgeshire Times* a few years ago that Mr. Rayner committed suicide. This is not true. It was his wife's brother, Joshua Hatch, who took his own life in consequence of his extreme disappointment in not succeeding to the Wicken Hall Estate. There were circumstances in his life which so shocked the pure mind of

Sarah Rayner that she altered her previous intentions, which had undoubtedly been to bequeath him this much-coveted home. But Joshua had formed "*un union libre*" with the daughter of a labourer upon the estate whom he afterwards married, and whom Mrs. Rayner declared should "never be mistress of Wicken Hall." Hence the tragedy.

Mrs. Rayner built and endowed schools at Wicken, where boys and girls were well taught and trained in most useful knowledge by a good master and mistress in the principles of the Church of England.

These schools were in turn a great interest to Miss Mary Hatch, who went to reside at Cambridge after her sister's death, but who paid frequent visits to Wicken from thence. Subsequently Miss Hatch removed to Mildenhall, where she died, but her remains were brought to Wicken Church for interment. This lady built and endowed three capacious almshouses, to be occupied by the same number of widows, and selected by the vicar from the oldest female communicants. She also left funds to be distributed annually in coals and clothing.

Like Henry Cromwell, his wife, and several of his children, the remains of the two sisters were buried in the chancel of Wicken Church, as had been those of John Rayner many years before.

After Mrs. Rayner's death (which occurred in 1832, as may be seen by the marble tablet which hangs near, side by side with that erected to the memory of Miss Mary Hatch), Wicken Hall was tenanted by Mr. Matthew Witt, during which period and previously Spinney Abbey Farm was occupied by the late Mr. John Appleyard Johnson, who quitted Spinney for Wicken Hall on the removal of Mr. Matthew Witt from Wicken to Winfold, a farm in the parish of Waterbeach. Witt is an old name in the neighbourhood of Swaffham Fen, and at one time, like many more names, had the prefix of de, which seems to imply Norman descent, and Appleyard is an old name on the Swaffham side of the Fen, one Captain Appleyard, it is stated, having been given a considerable portion of the same for some brave defence made during the Civil Wars of the Cromwell epoch. But prior to that the Appleyard family owned and occupied a fine old property in Norfolk, in the vicinity if not on the same spot as that which had formerly held the fair Amy Robsart of historic renown.

But better than fair descent is fair living. Both Messrs. Johnson and Witt were splendid types of the agriculturist, possessing very high business qualities and giving close application to the same, which led to honourable success in times when success was possible to men of

education beyond the average farmer of the period. Mr. Frederick Appleyard Johnson (the youngest son) succeeded his father as tenant of Wicken Hall,¹ which he occupies still, though finding his headquarters at Soham.

Another prominent family at Wicken has resided in this parish for more than a century and a half, people much distinguished for kindness of heart and generosity of disposition—that of Aspland. Three generations have, in the experience of the writer, occupied the position of gentleman farmer. Many a horkey (or harvest-home supper) has taken place in the parish of Wicken, but none was ever so famous as that held at the Sycamores. Many a round of beef and many a leg of mutton, many a plum pudding, and many other good things have mingled their steamy fragrance under that hospitable roof. Many a horkey load of wheat has been the central feature of a gay procession, its horses decked with bright ribbons and flowers and boughs, while a pair of men *en harlequin* were dressed to represent the sexes. Old men still live who talk over the good fare, the nutbrown home-brewed ale, and the merry songs which were the *sine quâ non* of a horkey feast, while long clay pipes filled the air with the fumes of the reeking weed.

¹ Mr. F. A. Johnson has recently purchased the Wicken Hall Estate.

James Bacon, a dark, swarthy man of brigand appearance, was a prominent songster on many a recurring festival, but none closed without the famous one beginning—

“Here’s a health unto our Master, the founder of the feast,”

followed by the adjuration—

“Drink, boys drink, drink, and mind you do not spill,
For if you do you shall drink two, for ’tis your Master’s will.”

But modern customs and the march of civilisation have changed all that. The horkey at Wicken died a natural death about forty years ago. Harvest-home teas have become popular in the district. The vicar and his wife take the lead, and are ably assisted by the two churchwardens and their wives, and an almost general gathering surrounds the teacups, while fare of a simpler character and more suited to present “times” accompanies “the cup which cheers but not inebriates” in the shape of bread and butter and cakes. A musical entertainment generally follows the tea, in which some of the Board School children have played a conspicuous part, when musical drill and recitations have raised such feelings of pardonable pride in the breasts of parents and grandparents present, that smiles have been recognised on the face of the

"un-laughing" Fenlander. But Wicken is loyal, and "God Save the King" usually closes the festival, when collections are made to pay expenses, the sixpenny ticket not being found sufficient to cover these and other Mission Hall expenses. Occasionally a neighbouring vicar, and other friends of more advanced musical ability, come over to these festivals and assist in amusing and elevating rural taste.

But though horkeys have given place to simpler entertainments and the diminished price in corn has told upon the fortunes of the upper-class farmer, and the labourer's condition has much improved—though some of the community may not be able to assist the needy and the sick as in days before—yet the present is largely gilded by the past, and the power of association is a potent quantity. If man can be brave enough to live on amid a change of fortune, the kindness which has been cast upon the waters in more prosperous days will surely return to him, for there is truth in Holy Writ, which says: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Offshoots of the Aspland family who proceeded from the Chestnuts in the early part of the century have gained distinction in the learned professions, notably a Mr. Lindsey Aspland, Q.C., who was cut off at the very opening of a brilliant career, after a short illness, having fallen a victim to

influenza. This occurred in 1891, in London. Perhaps one may quote some verses upon Wicken, which were written by the grandfather of the Q.C.—the Rev. Robert Aspland, of Hackney, long since deceased, but who gained fame and honour in the Unitarian community to which he attached himself, and celebrity in the literature belonging to that sect. (Harriet Martineau published her first article in a magazine edited by the Rev. Robert Aspland.) The ancient home of the Asplands is now spoken of as the Chestnuts. Mr. Robert, its present occupant as well as proprietor, succeeded his father in the inheritance. He (the late Mr. Isaac Aspland) was a man of the strictest integrity, and being better educated than many of his neighbours was often repaired to for advice, which was felt would be sound and reliable. He was a Unitarian, and at one time had a chapel for worshippers of that faith upon his own premises, and within recent years pilgrims of the same sect have come hither to view the remains of it.

Perhaps having reached the shop (the only one of any consequence in Wicken formerly) the Rev. Robert Aspland's verses, which were the effusion of his boyhood's days, and written in the second decade of the century, may now be quoted :—

“ Arrive we now at village shop,
Where they who come delight to stop.
Things of all sorts here tempt the eye
And seem to say, ‘Come buy, come buy’ ;
There’s scarce a want but here’s supplied,
From Nature’s wants to those of pride;
The catalogue of goods would fill
(Need we say more?) a lawyer’s bill.

Hither the dames and lassies come
Whene’er they find it dull at home,
Make a pretence of buying pins
To blab abroad their neighbours’ sins ;
Or plead they want a farthing candle,
When all they want is downright scandal.
Behind the counter with arch smile,
Shopkeeper stands, and serves the while.

Isaac his name for honour known,
None better liked throughout the town,
Who sells his goods, and gives his joke,
But always guards his smartest stroke
Of wit from hurting man or child.
A wag with temper ever mild,
Save when the worthless pay no debt,
Contriving only goods to get ;
Then he looks stern, as well he may ;
Wisely declares he will not stay,
For they who buy should surely pay.”

A distant relative of the Rev. Robert Aspland of several succeeding generations has recently brought out a most interesting book on the Captivity of the Jews, in addition to a very useful arrangement of Collects in book form for daily use. The Rev. Euston Nurse, Cantab, M.A.,

is the author referred to. His early home was at Wicken Hall.

Fuller is, after all, the oldest name in the parish, as Mr. Benjamin Fuller, who farmed at Padney in the early part of the century, followed previous Fullers and has been succeeded by a son and grandson on the same farm. Besides which another grandson has become the resident tenant of Spinney Abbey—not the original home of the monks and friars of long ago, as the tottering walls of the old abbey (or priory, as it used to be called) were taken down about the year 1799, and a good, substantial farmhouse erected in its place. But stones of ecclesiastical carving lie around the front of the Abbey Farmhouse, doing duty of an ornamental character. In 1750 the Rev. Andrew Fuller, a celebrated Nonconformist, was born at Wicken, who afterwards became pastor of the Baptist Church at Kettering, and was an influential promoter of the Baptist Missionary Society—a most godly man, whose name is held sacred by all denominations who value earnestness and zeal in Christian work and live a holy life. But what a field for thought is thus opened up—predecessors who were monks and predecessors who were Nonconformists, but, as Dr. Butler remarks, and wisely, “Many folds, one flock.”

The families of Sutton, How, Staples, Slack, and Dennis (the writer is taking them according to their then geographical position) were also farmers to a considerable extent from the early part to beyond the middle of the century. Mr. Thomas Sutton, sen., occupied the Tithe Farm at Upware from 1824 to 1845, when the tithes were taken in kind until the Tithe Commutation Act, which came into force in 1837. At that time Mr. Thomas How rented the farm now occupied by Mr. Todd, and afterwards his son, Mr. John How, also a miller, farmed the same offhand, residing at Wicken in the house which forms Barton's shop. Mr. John Tebbit was the landlord of the Nelson Inn at Upware until succeeded by his son-in-law, Mr. Thomas Peachey. Applebys and Densons have followed since. At that time the only cottages seen in Upware Lane were those belonging to the Shaw family (good, worthy people !), still standing by the Mission Hall. One Richard Shaw and his estimable daughter Jane (afterwards Rowlinson) lived in the one farthest from the road, and Richard Shaw the younger in that facing the road. Both were horsekeepers in succession at Upware on the Tithe Farm, and were much valued by their employer. Jane would walk to Cambridge Market (quite ten miles) and back with her butter basket on her arm.¹ Mr. Luke Staples held the High Fen

¹ A long basket to carry its butter of a yard in length.

Farm, then a very large occupation, which subsequently underwent division (most probably at the sale which followed Miss Hatch's death), and Mr. Joseph Slack rented Thorn Hall Farm, which gave him the leadership among several other relatives of the same name, and whereon he won for himself the distinction of a first-rate farmer. Two brothers, James and John Dennis, occupied the Spinney Farm after Mr. John Appleyard Johnson's departure, but Mr. James removed into Suffolk. His brother John, however, remained on into the sixties, with a growing family about him. During that period Mr. Goodall farmed at Padney. Mr. John Docking occupied Gray's Farm, and near him resided, in separate homesteads, the brothers William and John Slack, also farmers. Mr. William Willson, of Bassingbourn Farm, Fordham, succeeded Mr. Sutton at Upware in 1845. He expired a year since. Mr. James Hawes farmed at Fenside, where his son, Mr. Joseph, has succeeded him, while other sons have passed away and some younger branches have taken root elsewhere. Such is life! Another family, of the name of Martin, long held Afterway Hall, recently pulled down. Old Mrs. Priscilla Martin lived there a great many years, honoured and respected. She brought up a large family of sons and daughters, all of whom have shot forth their

branches elsewhere. This venerable lady (*née* Ryder) lived into the nineties, as did a contemporary of hers, Mr. William Aspland, paternal grandfather of the Mr. Isaac Aspland now living on the same spot as his venerable relative lived and died in the year 184-. Another contemporary of the above was Mr. John Cropley, who resided many years at Peacock Farm, long known as "Preston's" since Mr. Preston succeeded Mr. Cropley in the holding. A very worthy man this Mr. Preston, an incident in connection with whom is worth relating. In 1865, when the cattle plague made havoc in many a stockyard at Wicken, and fine cows were in a few hours seized fatally with death and had to be swiftly buried out of sight, Mr. Preston enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing his own cows passed over. In gratitude to Divine Providence for this exemption, he gave every year to the Wesleyan Missionary Society a sovereign as a thankoffering. Mr. Preston passed away about four years ago, and Mr. William Bishop now occupies Peacock Farm. Another mid-century farmer was Mr. Robert Mortlock, who for many years occupied the farm now held by his great-nephew, Mr. Robert Mortlock Treen. He married a sister of Mr. John Cropley, mentioned above, and being childless adopted Mr. Henry Treen, his nephew, who

succeeded him. Mr. and Mrs. Mortlock, long such near neighbours of the Aspland family, were for many years included among the dining-room guests at the annual horkey gatherings at the Sycamores. Another well-remembered face is that of the late Mr. William Henry Rye King, who for so many years laboured at Soham as assistant-surgeon, in the first instance to Mr. Edward Lloyd Knowles, and afterwards to the latter's successor, the late much-respected and lamented Dr. George Willis. Mr. King, whose professional duties often called him to Wicken, so lived in the hearts of the poor that he seldom was allowed to enjoy his autumnal holiday, generally spent at Wicken, in peace, and suspicious ailments seemed to crop up in order to secure a visit from Mr. King. To the end of his days he remained rich in their love, though poor in purse. Few men have been more regretted than the assistant of Dr. George Willis, and now it is his kind employer whose loss we feel.

One more contemporary ere we close the subject. Mr. James Dennis farmed and resided at a pleasant, old-fashioned residence near the pond, now occupied by Mr. James Bullman. The younger son of this Mr. Dennis has been a prominent parish official for more than half a century, and would be much missed. His brother-in-law (who married Miss Sarah Dennis),

was succeeded in the Spinney Farm by a Mr. Coxall, and afterwards Mr. Golding, who bought the property. His son occupied it previous to Mr. Fuller. Thus Spinney Abbey has frequently changed hands. It is a long time since a Lord of the Manor has resided at Wicken, Mr. Rayner having been the last. Mr. Thornton became a subsequent lord. The present Lords of the Manor are Messrs. Paine and Brettell, of Chertsey, who purchased it in 1881, and instantly turned their attention to the enfranchisement of the copyhold lands, which some felt very heavily.

Before closing this chapter the author would like to mention another literary aspirant akin in family and taste to the Rev. Robert Aspland, quoted before, and maternal grandmother of the Rev. Euston J. Nurse. This lady—Mrs. John Appleyard Johnson—(*née* Aspland) was greatly esteemed at Wicken as a most excellent wife and mother, a clever manager, and a wise and kind mistress. Amid other acquirements she found time to worship at Helicon's fount, and we are sorry space does not admit of our doing adequate justice to her compositions.

The following lines, however, will show a refinement of taste and culture above the average of those of her contemporaries whose school-days must have been over quite a century ago.

They will also illustrate two names familiar in the parish ; especially to old residents.

AN ACROSTIC.

(Written by the late Mrs. J. A. Johnson (née Aspland), formerly of Spinney Abbey, and afterwards of Wicken Hall, now the property of her youngest son.)

ASP-LAND.

My first for venom is well known ;
My second is by tillers sown ;
My whole you'll find if you're discreet
To be a proper noun complete.

WIT.

With three simple letters my whole does command.
It is the best pilot by sea and by land,
For money without it is but a mere tool
Put into the hands to be used by a fool.
It's a name¹ its possession, it's Nature's best prize,
'Tis caressed by the learned, the great, and the wise.
It's nowhere to be purchased, nowhere to be bought,
Yet, it's virtue discovered, 'tis easily taught.
'Tis so hard to possess it, so much to attain,
That those who're without it, without it remain.
So much I have said, and the rest I'll submit
To your good understanding, and learning, and wit.

¹ The name of Mr. Matthew Witt, who lived at Wicken Hall some years, but left in the forties of last century for Winfold Waterbeach, when Mr. J. A. Johnson became tenant of Wicken Hall.

CHAPTER IV

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"God is in all that liberates and lifts,
In all that humbles, sweetens, and consoles."

LOWELL.

WELL now, with regard to matters ecclesiastical, what is the continuity in the history of Wicken? One cannot pick up all the threads which have been dropped since the time of Mr. Grimmer,¹ though the writer can go back a good way in the century. Until recently the appointment was that of a perpetual curacy. Some time in the thirties the Rev. Mr. Asker did duty here, and was succeeded by the Rev. Edward Cropley, a nephew of the Mrs. Sarah Rayner and Miss Mary Hatch mentioned before. But there was no vicarage, no residence for the clergyman in those days, and so the poor curate generally lodged at Soham, once a market town, and distant from Wicken four miles by the public road as before stated. There is a nearer way across the fields, but at that time it was almost

¹ There is a memorial to Mrs. Grimmer within the Communion rail of the chancel of Wicken Church.

impassable in winter, and the consequences were sometimes disastrous. There was never but one service held on Sundays—morning service one Sunday and afternoon service the next. But occasionally the clergyman failed to come at all, and people went to St. Lawrence only to return with their prayer-books unopened and their minds unedified. Some of these were very wrathful towards the clergyman, others made unpleasant references to Bacchus, but the more piously inclined betook themselves to the Wesleyan Chapel, where one Mr. Coburn used to discourse, who called himself "Plain Johnnie." The only week-day services were those of Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and Christmas Day at the Parish Church.

We elder folk, therefore, feel very grateful to the Wesleyan community, whose lamp of gospel light was held out to us when that of our own Church had grown dim.

But a change was to come. Early in the forties matters began to mend. The Rev. Edward Cromptley was succeeded in the curacy by the Rev. Richard Lee Allnutt.¹ Bricklayers were set to work, and a small double-fronted house was transformed into a comfortable parsonage.

¹ A son of this Mr. Allnutt has since been a curate at Christ Church, Cambridge, and a nephew is now the vicar of St. Sepulchre's (or Round Church).

The village gardener, Robert Canham, bestowed his skill and taste in laying out the garden from whence issued on Sunday mornings the new clergyman and his sisters, Miss Jemima and Miss Martha (Matty) Allnutt, who at once inspired the villagers with interest.

One seems to see them now—the energetic, enthusiastic young clergyman and his bright-eyed young sisters, wending their way down the village to the new Sunday Schools just started into life. Besides which, monthly meetings were held in the study at the vicarage in connection with Church work. A District Visiting Society was formed. C.M.S. boxes showed up in the village homes, and one William Bailey, a labouring man, used to give the writer sixpence a month to the C.M.S. cause, besides which he taught in the Sunday School. This good man was taken home early upon a sudden call to his reward. Cottage prayer-meetings were held in the out-lying places, and in a room at How's Farm, Upware (belonging to the house which was afterwards burnt down when in the late Mrs. Fison's occupation), the writer has a distinct recollection of the Rev. R. L. Allnutt's ministrations.

Thus a great revival came into the religious life of the place, for the reverend gentleman's energies never flagged. During his charge the village church underwent restoration, when the services

were temporarily held in a barn belonging to Mr. Thomas Sutton, sen. (then tenanted by his eldest son), but which was burnt down with the other farm buildings (which had become the property of Mr. Joseph Bailey) in the year of the Queen's Jubilee of 1887. The church was reopened in 1844, and sermons upon the occasion were preached by the late Rev. C. J. Phipps Eyre, vicar of St. Mary's, Bury St. Edmund's, and the late Rev. Professor Scholefield, of Cambridge.

Soon after this circumstances and a strong missionary bias induced Mr. Allnutt to resign the curacy, and leave England for missionary work in India. A son has since followed the parent's good example, viz., he who formerly ministered at Christ Church, Cambridge. Towards the end of the fourth decade the Rev. William Fleetwood, an older and a sadder man, came into residence at Wicken Parsonage.

It is said that if one thinks of a long-past time the mind gives such a dreamy colouring to it that neither men, women, nor landscape are quite such as one ever saw. "Distance lends enchantment to the view," even of time, and yet the writer has a distinct remembrance of the pale, sad face of the Rev. William Fleetwood, his pulpit attacks on the dissenters, and of his emphatic and oft-repeated utterances concerning

"the duly authorised and lawfully appointed ministers." Of course this gave great offence, besides being contrary to the teaching of St. Paul, and more people left the Church.

Now we come to a brighter administration—that of the Rev. Charles William Francken, B.A., whose residence at Wicken Parsonage began early in the fifties. Well, what shall we say of him? That he was a true gentleman in every sense of the word no one can deny, which of course means a Christian gentleman. Those who knew him well declare that his life was a sermon, that he did everything in his power to promote the temporal as well as spiritual interests of his people during the fifteen years he ministered to their needs, and that was far better and more soul-reaching than mere platform or pulpit eloquence. In all good work Mr. Francken was most ably assisted by his equally well-disposed and like-minded wife. Indeed under their influence people felt stirred to do something good and true in the battle of life. The work begun in Mr. Allnutt's time went on under the Francken administration to a much longer period in smoothness, and perhaps through the greater experience of this older pair. Besides which Mrs. Francken was a woman of exceptional ability with a rare intelligence and of a sensible, practical turn of mind. "A good 'un' to go!"

as a villager declared. Under the guidance of Mr. and Mrs. Francken night-school work went on briskly in the fifties, for in those days many of the inhabitants could neither read nor write. An old woman in the eighth decade of her life, told the writer not long since that she had never had any other "schooling" than that she had received in the night schools of that time, and she could now read her Bible well. The writer remembers this woman-pupil at that time, when with spectacles on she would most industriously give her attention to the task before her, and the thought would sometimes arise, "How pleasant it is to teach those who so earnestly desire to learn!"

Formerly in Wicken Church under the western arch there was a small gallery or singers' pew where the village choir collected on Sundays and from whence the sounds of clarionet, violin, and lusty voices issued forth. Miss Francken changed all that, working hard in the training of her choir. The gallery was taken down and a new harmonium placed instead just below the old singing pew at which Miss Francken presided and gathered her choir about her, in addition to which they were taken occasionally to musical festivals at Cambridge and Ely, by which their musical taste was advanced.

These good people removed in 1869 to a seaside town on the south coast in consequence

of Mr. Francken's failing health, but all that was mortal of the dear pastor was brought back and laid to rest under the green turf of the churchyard where for so many years his footsteps had gone and returned to the House of God on Sundays. This occurred in August, 1880.

Mrs. Francken expired at Eastbourne in 1894, and was buried there—a matter of regret to many of their old parishioners, but the churchyard at Wicken was closed. However, a brass tablet to her memory was erected (partly by subscription) on the inner wall of the north side of the church. This took place about a quarter of a century after their departure.

Thus we cannot say with the Roman of old, "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is often buried with their bones." No, rather we must invert the theory.

Many of the parishioners now speak of the excellent work done in the late Miss Hatch's schools during the ministry of Mr. Francken, when a very worthy pair, Mr. and Mrs. Farnham, presided over them.

The needlework taught the girls, the results of which may still be seen in the strong clothing which the men and women wear, and even the outer raiment of the men (usually tailor-made), and in the stockings which the women had learned to knit under the guiding hand and eye of Mrs. Farnham.

The worthy schoolmaster and schoolmistress were most ably and sympathetically helped and encouraged in their work by Mr. and Mrs. Francken.

But it was not all school-time. "The mind ill brooks the same dull round," and entertainments of a healthy character were sometimes given and enjoyed by the inhabitants of the village. Music and recitations were on such occasions much appreciated. One recitation about to be quoted will probably recall the time to some who were present.

The lines were written by a young lady who was lovely in her life here, and has most probably blossomed into fuller beauty in her Father's home above since she was prematurely taken away from the scenes of earth.

The opening lines or prologue were probably recited by the worthy minister or his niece Miss Flora Davis.

"Now Wicken lads and lassies all
Collected here to-night,
While I your goings-on recall
Come listen with your might.

For sure when work by day is o'er
And faces washed quite clean,
And hair combed up with tuft before,
Right pleasant 'tis, I ween,

To sit and listen with one's ears
And gaze with all one's eyes
While Mrs. Francken's ghost appears
And Wicken singers rise."

The ghost story being omitted from the record the writer must proceed at once to give the piece recited, which is entitled :—

"A RIDE THROUGH WICKEN.

"BY THE BLACK-BEARDED TRAVELLER.

"I'll tell you now the story of a traveller of renown,
Who came from London down by rail and passed through
Cambridge town ;
And then with speed, I scarce know how, at Upware he
appeared
And astonished all beholders by the blackness of his
beard ;
For he had been in foreign lands, and various nations
seen,
And after that to make his notes he sped through England
green.
Behold him then at Upware, he turns his gaze around,
Beside the water's gurgle he scarcely heard a sound.
The landscape round was flat to view, but here and there
he saw
Fat cattle grazing, standing corn, and turf without a flaw.
A shady lane then led him towards the Spinney road,
While the sun in gorgeous colours the circling fenlands
showed.
Far on the blue horizon the towers of Ely rise,
A pyramid of beauty that climbs into the skies,
Still on the broad highway, the traveller rides along,
And homeward to their dinner he sees a sturdy throng
Of ploughmen and of ploughboys, on horses tramping
slow,
In tranquil rumination, through light and shadow go.

Now on the right, across the fields, an ancient house of stone

O'ergrown in part with mosses, stands silent and alone.

This solitary homestead, two hundred years ago,
Belonged to one whose father ruled our England's weal
and woe.

Protector he was called : the Cromwell at whose will
King Charles the First was put to death that he his place
might fill.

Spinney Abbey is the title of this dwelling now as then;
But at that time very different was the broad surrounding
fen.

No cornfields then o'erspread the plain, nor pasture lands
were seen ;

But waters drear flowed silently mid flags and rushes
green ;

For the drainings of the fen-swamp that have rescued so
much ground

But just began in those days, the Bedford Level found.

So even more than now, I do not doubt that then

This Wicken on its rising ground, from out the desert fen,

Like green oasis in the waste, shone as an emerald gem.

Well, Spinney passed, the traveller still came riding slowly
on,

Drew near the village, entered it, while bright the sun still
shone.

Cottages and almshouses, the school he now descries,

Where stand a crowd of children, who stare with all their
eyes :

For they are waiting 'till 'tis time for school again once
more,

And Mr. Farnham shall emerge from out his own house
door ;

And Mrs. Farnham's ready for the girls to enter in,

And their lessons and their needlework again with care
begin.

Still onward goes the traveller, right past the village shop
Where honest goods and worthiness entice the folks to
stop.

Then sees the master's houses, a comfortable sight,
With red geraniums in the front, and gardens trim and
bright.

Down on the left there stretches a pathway round the
pond

Where ducks may dabble, children paddle, ponies feed
beyond.

The pathway and the green with cottages are lined,
Whitewashed and thatched and picturesque and snugness
all combined ;

The vine twines o'er them clustering, with purple grapes
and green—

Now do you think that e'er a prettier sight you've seen ?

Still on the traveller rides, remarking every sight,
Another green is passed, and still another on the right
Where another duck-pond¹ lies, and in a corner of this
green—

A queer old stone-like pixies' stool was once in order seen ;
But now I hear some foolish youths have knocked this relic
down,

Where once perhaps a village cross rose upward from the
town.

Next on the left, by orchards flanked, the parsonage
he sees,

A vine o'ergrowing plain brick walls, and round about it
trees.

'Tis here that Parson Francken lives, his wife, and children
all,

His cows and pigs and donkeys, his cats and pigeons small.

Beyond it lies a field extending by the road,

And on the other side the path to church clear showed.

Along this path on Sundays, there winds a decent throng,
With here and there a scarlet cloak,² slow passing all
along.

¹ Since then this pond has been filled in.

² This gipsy cloak of scarlet cloth used to be the fashion
with elderly peasant women, but nothing of the kind is
seen now.

A comfort to the eyes this scarlet is to see,
Much prettier than new fashions you surely will agree.
The church from out its trees, the traveller next beholds—
A grey tower rising from the green that round about
enfolds.

Behind it stands the Hall, and onward past its gate,
A lane towards the Soham field runs forward clear and
straight.

The traveller also settled that one Sunday he would be
Inside the church in some way, the goings-on to see.
And much was he astonished to see some Wicken boys
Indulging in some gigglings, and quite unseemly noise
Of movings and of whisperings, and some e'en half asleep.
'Oh, boys!' thought he, 'such conduct would make the
angels weep.

Oh, boys, oh, boys! I'm sorry this conduct now to see,
You surely do not think why all in church should be,
Nor how when there you ought to know whose House we
all are in,

For nonsense and forgetfulness when there are surely sin.
I know you want to kick your heels, and twist as none can
tell.

'Tis hard for boys to keep quite still, I know that very well,
But 'tis not much that you can do, and surely you could
try

To worship with your bodies, and turn your thoughts on
high.'

Likewise on coming out of church, some urchins wild
were seen,
Loud-shouting, tumbling, capering, forgetting where they'd
been.

Well, as at first the traveller upon his horse forth rode,
Proceeding through the Soham field upon the Soham
road,

His thoughts were much as follows, he wrote them in his
book,

And with them on his travels, these memories he took :
'Oh, happy Wicken villagers! how peacefully you dwell,
In quietness and sturdiness, no tongue can surely tell ;

While round and round the busy world far off is clashing
on,
With strifes, and wars, and struggles, until its heart is
gone,
Full oft in care and hardships, and doleful want of work ;
While underneath its splendour, full oft sad sorrows lurk.
The moon that shines on Wicken green so peaceful and so
bright,
That moon on other lands looks down on many a dreadful
sight.
Far off in broad America ¹ what woes she gazes on,
Where brother fights 'gainst brother, and father against
son !
Yet in divers parts 'tis tranquil, and safe for them that
dwell.
While in Canada (the British) the folk did ne'er rebel
Against their Queen Victoria, and I hope they never will !
In Europe, too, the people are often sore oppressed,
So let us then be thankful that we are safe at rest.
And though in winter, as I'm told, this Wicken's somewhat
dull,
Why then's the time, my lads, for you sage learning's fruits
to cull.
Night schools are open then for you, and you can write at
home,
Or draw, or read, if so you like, and let your fancy roam.
For earth is not your boundary, you'll surely not deny,
And the more your feet are in the mud the more your
thoughts should fly.'
So farewell then the traveller said, ' I speed upon my way ;
But for Wicken I will always shout, hip, hip, hip, hip,
hooray ! ' "

Many other instances of well-intentioned enter-
prises and good advice to those who sought it,
might be quoted ; but we must hasten on. This

¹ The war between North and South in America in 1865.

much-respected family were succeeded in the parsonage by the late Rev. William Piers Hardman. The writer was not residing at Wicken during this pastorate, but the late worthy vicar, his wife and family, are remembered with interest and affection by many. Mr. Hardman was a sound churchman, a good earnest preacher, and one who had the courage of his opinions. His sermons and his kindly visits to the cottages are still spoken of by those who knew him. He had difficulties to encounter in the place, and it is not in the power of every man to meet with unruffled brow opposing forces. The faculty of conciliation is not given to all men alike, and we shall scarcely be judged by a just God for the non-use of talents which were never ours to put into exercise. But death dissolved the tie that existed between Mr. Hardman and his people at Wicken. In the after-glow of sunset, when the troubled voyager "has crossed the bar and met his Pilot face to face," as our late ripest, richest singer has phrased it, one can only remember the earnestness and truth of the deceased clergyman.

The little Mission Hall at Upware owes its origin to the late Rev. Richard Piers Hardman. This Vicar of Wicken's remains were interred in the Mill Road cemetery at Cambridge (his native town), in 1885, beside those of his first wife.

After that sad event the vicarage was occupied

for seven years by the Rev. T. W. Thomas, M.A. He was a man of the same type of mind as the Rev. R. L. Allnutt. His ardour for the missionary cause was very great, and he worked for it with unflagging zeal. The Temperance question was hardly second to it, and a strong army of Blue Ribbonists seemed to spring up under his influence. He was instrumental in bringing several improvements into the church, but the souls of men were his strong point. His labours after the youth of the place were ably seconded by his sympathetic, painstaking, and bright helpmate. The Mission Hall at Wicken must so long as it lasts remain a standing memorial of the Rev. T. W. Thomas. It was commemorative of the Queen's Jubilee of 1887, and has proved an immense comfort to those worshippers who from increasing years and other infirmities have found the parish church, three fields from the village, a trying distance. The Rev. T. W. Thomas removed with Mrs. Thomas and their five sons to St. Barnabas, Cambridge, in November, 1892, and were very greatly regretted. But Mill Road is the gainer, and in addition to the great work Mr. Thomas is doing there, he has this year witnessed the completion of a Diamond Jubilee Memorial Institute, with which the names of three great men are associated in addition to his own. That of Professor Babington is one of them.

Well, an interregnum of five months followed upon Mr. Thomas's departure from Wicken, during which time clergymen came, looked, and departed, probably dismayed by the winter mud. Picture the state of Wicken at that time, with no clergyman between Sundays. Imagine how the people missed the bright and sympathetic faces of their late vicar, and his charming helpmate, and the universal lamentation evinced ! No wonder that in the absence of a clerical leadership the village scribbler took refuge in verse-writing. The following effusion is one outcome of the period :—

THE ACONITE,
OR SUNSHINE AND SHADE IN A DESERTED VILLAGE.

"There's a flower it shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine."

WORDSWORTH.

I.

So at Lakeside poet sang,
Babbling forth a mighty clang.
Celandine, where hid'st thou here,
Under marsh or brambles near ?
First of flowers to greet my sight,
Is the little Aconite !

2.

Piercing through the frost-bound earth,
Struggling in the New Year's birth,
First of strugglers, thou shalt be
First in interest to me.
For a lesson in hard fight
Is the little Aconite.

3.

On a bank¹ across the way,
Golden blooms look bright and gay.
They were tended year by year,
By a hand no longer here ;
By an eye as glad and bright
As the little Aconite.

4.

But alas ! no " Moated Grange "
Could appear more empty strange
Than that parsonage mould'ring brown
(E'en the tree-tops seem to frown).
Nothing there looks glad and bright,
Save the bank of Aconite.

5.

Last year children's voices made
Music in the sun and shade,
Little feet would go and come ;
Now there's silence in that home.
Crumbling stones will soon alight
On the bank of Aconite.

6.

Clerics come, and clerics go
(Dreadful stoics they, I know),
Finding neither light nor grace
In the sad and sombre place.
Not an eye lends gleam more bright
For that bank of Aconite.

¹ At Wicken vicarage. These Aconites came from a vicarage in Norfolk, said to have been planted there by Amy Robsart.

7.

Am I mad, or are the times
Bad as any woman's rhymes?
Do these clerics fear to meet
Cromwell's ghost in this retreat?
Could a heart feel no delight
In that bank of Aconite?

8.

In a home of pleasant ease
Sentinelled by stately trees,
Year by year as seasons roll
Flora's hand renews the bowl.
But no flower is welcomed quite
As the little Aconite.

9.

Picture garden quaint and old
(Orchard boughs entwine, unfold),
See beneath the leafless trees,
And the bushes bare as these,
Golden masses left and right
Of the gracious Aconite.

10.

Snowdrops follow in its train,
Struggling to begin their reign,
Pure white tresses gravely cold
Coming after sturdy gold.
Snowdrop plains, and snowdrops white
Pale in warmth of Aconite.

11.

Dukes and Dames may have their flower,
Orchids rare deck Beauty's Bower.
Give me that which cheers the eye
Of the humbler passer-by;
That which cheers my humble sight
Is the brave sweet Aconite.

12.

Gilded Hall¹ and polished floor,
Courtly ladies gliding o'er,
'Mid the pauses of the dance
Find refreshment when their glance
Falls on mossy bank bedight
With the golden Aconite.

13.

Yes we love thee, dear old flower,
Coming at our saddest hour,
Coming under bush and tree
Sweet a flower as eye can see.
And I sing thy praise with might,
Dear old faithful Aconite.

At length the Rev. William Robinson appeared on a bright day in spring, when the whole aspect of Wicken was changed. He accepted the appointment to the living, and now his great idea is to see the grand old parish church (dedicated to St. Lawrence) restored.

The edifice is probably seven or eight hundred years old, and is a fine, commodious building, cruciform in shape, with fine pillars and arches. Those who understand architecture will tell you that the structure is of Early English, with touches of Norman about it. Then there are the Cromwellian memorials and associations and whichever way you approach this old church dedicated to St. Lawrence you cannot fail to admire it. Approaching it from westward through

¹ That of the Guildhall, Cambridge, when, at a recent ball there, aconites in moss adorned the room.

Slade Close the ancient tower is a picturesque object, girt about with fine old trees.

Who will help to restore this ancient building? The dust of the worthy lies sleeping about it, and in many instances is that of the fathers and forefathers of Wicken people.

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER V

" All hearts confess the saints elect,
Who twain in faith, in love agree,
And melt not in an acid sect
The Christian pearl of charity."

WHITTIER.

BUT this is not the history of Wicken. Were the last stroke of the pen to have been already put, it would seem but a very one-sided affair, and the historian is in honour bound to be impartial. Having committed St. Lawrence Church (that grand old edifice outside the village) to the notice of the benevolent, the capable, and the well disposed, we must proceed to mention the commodious, and within recent years much-enlarged Wesleyan Chapel, which is situate towards the west end of the village. The thrift and energy in the sect to which it belongs is well known, and the Temperance cause flourishes admirably in its midst. The Wesleyan Missionary Society is also strongly supported by its members, and the Bible Society

collectors find no lack of sympathy and help in their appeals.

A most useful benefit club is in the hands of the Wesleyan body entitled, "The Sons of Humanity."

Its Sunday School for boys and girls is large and well attended.

Then there is the Primitive Methodist Chapel, standing in a lane opposite the Chestnuts, leading northward, which has also been enlarged within recent years, although the village population has so considerably decreased.

Mention has been made in this history of Lady Bassingbourn having in 1321 founded and endowed a hospital for seven men, together with a portion of land. This hospital for about 550 years formed seven tenements, which were occupied by poor people irrespective of sex until the whole building fell into absolute ruin, and was condemned accordingly.

It was a terrible loss to the aged poor, many of whom prefer to live on half a crown a week rather than go to the Union, which is an unconquerable theme of dislike. But then how are they to pay the rent of a cottage? Certainly half a crown a week leaves no surplus. Well, sooner than go to the workhouse the old people will submit almost to be buried alive in the crumbling walls of the most wretched hovel; although we

know how much better they would be cared for in every way.

But it isn't home, and that is the crucial point. Many instances could even in this parish be quoted to prove the truth of the assertion. Perhaps one will suffice.

Old Mrs. Sarah Bullman, who died about three years since, having reached the venerable age of ninety years and odd, is a case in point. The following lines were written upon her at the time of her interment by one who had often visited her :—

IN MEMORIAM (S.B.).

Farewell ! farewell ! and now a long farewell,
The ancient Dame lies low beneath the sod,
Where many faces she had known in life
Rest in that graveyard, sacred ground of God.

And yet methinks I see her standing now
By the rude wicket greeting passer-by,
And the old corn-land spreading far and wide
And Ely's minster and the clear blue sky.

How gladly Sally welcomed friendly face,
So pleased "to have a word" within the door
Where all alone she lived by day and night
'Mid tumbling walls (and oh ! the rough old floor !).

'Mid tumbling walls, where oft at slumber time,
The mice would spring from out some broken space,
And get poor Sally's food, perchance a gift
Of comfortable fare, which had found place.

And yet 'twas home ! her home ! to her "sweet home" !
No word would Sally hear about the "House" :
No matter only half a crown a week,
No matter loneliness, or startling mouse.

And now she's brought the humble chair outside
Where green potato-crop wears thrifty look,
And Sally learns the habits of the birds,
And many lessons from Dame Nature's book.

She feeds the birds from out her little store,
She knows that she can trust One Bounteous Hand,
She knows it's an investment safe and sure,
She's learnt enough that truth to understand.

At eighty-seven our friend seeks lesson-book,
Her constant plaint is "Oh, that I could read !"
In year of nineteen-hundred-ninety-six
Such cry will seem a novelty indeed !

And now she hobbles forth with stick or staff,
The needed staff of fourscore years and ten ;
Seeks Job,¹ in "loving and united" mood,
And hopes to find him 'mong the patient men.

And now she's gone ! No more we'll read her hymns,
No more behold the joy gleam from her eye
As when some man of God or human voice
Sought Sally in that roof ope to the sky.

Farewell, old friend ! Thine was a place unique !
None other yet hath reached an age so green :
None other had such flowers as decked thy grave,
Such crowds as gathered near thy closing scene.

¹ Poor Job's patience had been often tried by her too
frequent visits to him and his wife.

And when the apple blossoms bloom afresh
And Springtide tempt us past old Sally's door,
We'll think of our old friend as called to rest,
Not lost for ever—only gone before.

It was resolved by the very energetic body of men who form the Parish Council that this state of things should be remedied, and that the Diamond Jubilee Year of our beloved Queen should witness the erection of six Diamond Jubilee cottages as almshouses.

Accordingly, on the 22nd of June an orderly crowd collected in the centre of Wicken to witness the stone-laying upon the old acre of land given by Lady Bassingbourn for the new cottages.

The proceedings commenced with the hymn "O God, our help in ages past," after which S. Howard, Esq., J.P., laid the first stone, which was speedily followed by others, each of whom contributed various sums of a substantial character. Altogether the Parish Council succeeded in realising £110, which, for a start in an agricultural village already terribly "hard hit" by bad times, was marvellous. But it all shows what energy, thrift, and self-denial will do. Those most nearly concerned in the undertaking fully justified Kingsley's idea of Fenmen—"hard and bold"—as described by him.

September 29th witnessed the beginning of the end. For the purpose of paying off the remaining

debt of £75 upon the building an unusually large bazaar was opened in the new almshouses, towards which quite abnormal energies had been contributed in order to ensure success. A concert and tea followed, and so large was the attendance that between four hundred and five hundred sat down to the latter, and altogether the desired object was achieved.

Among the friends from a distance who supported the chairman upon the occasion were the Rev. V. Minter (the master of the Newmarket workhouse) and Mr. S. J. Ennion, and in spite of the very violent thunderstorm which occurred on that day the undertaking was a complete success, sufficient money having been either taken at the time or soon afterwards, so that the whole debt was cleared off.

Mr. Brown having designed the end cottages as double tenements, those and the four single ones were soon occupied, and eight glad hearts entered undisturbed as residents, without fear of having to be taken to the dreaded "House."

But another Diamond Jubilee Memorial was erected to mark the time. A clock at the Jubilee Mission Hall, of 1887, was erected to fill a great want, the funds for which Mr. Isaac Aspland succeeded in collecting, and which will doubtless be of much use, especially to the inhabitants of the dwellings close by.



In the centre of this group of buildings will be seen the Diamond Jubilee Cottages, erected on the site of the old Almshouses by the Parish Council in 1897. The building beyond is the Jubilee Mission Hall of 1887, also commemorative of Queen Victoria. Rev. T. W. Thomas, Vicar.

So in spite of bad times and other difficulties some improvements go on at the agricultural village of Wicken. And yet, while recognising these improvements, wants grow as appetite is said to increase with eating. Fifty years back we had no daily post, but two or three times a week one Mrs. Peachey officiated as letter-carrier between Wicken Village and Soham Post Office. The letters were conveyed in a large, open wicker basket, which also brought medicine-bottles from the doctors. Occasionally there was a stoppage upon the way whilst Mrs. Peachey did a bit of field work on some land tenanted by her or her people, and caused both inconvenience and annoyance. Here is an instance: A churchwarden and leading farmer on returning from London had expected to be met at Newmarket Station in the regulation horse and gig of that period, but the needs of the field having proved too irresistible to the postmistress, the important letter had not reached its destination in time, and so the unfortunate gentleman had been obliged to hire. There are people still left who remember the time when parcels and letters went by carrier from Soham to London (including Wicken dispatches), and if one looks at old letters and envelopes of sixty years ago one often finds the figures 6 and 8 in distinct characters on the outside. Now, besides halfpenny postcards, we have

the penny post, which since Diamond Jubilee days is meant to cover four ounces of weight. It is a marvellous stride, and instead of "Bet Post" (as she was called familiarly) we have our postman in uniform arriving at 7 a.m. and ready for our dispatches again at 5.5 p.m. Truly this is very much to be thankful for, but we want a second delivery. Letters arriving for us by second post at Soham, the post town, necessitate a long interval. But then it may be urged that the telegraphic system has been made easier. Well, so it has, but telegrams are often alarming, and we hope some day there may be a second delivery of letters at Wicken.

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VI

"Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oftentimes no connection."

COWPER.

IN 1870 Board Schools came into operation and the old schools which had been established and cared for by the liberality of Mrs. Rayner and Miss Hatch were merged in the newer system, and a good long list of able schoolmistresses might be given. We believe Wicken is not behind the average scale of village Board Schools in secular knowledge, and the religious instruction is attended to morning by morning five days of the week by the vicar.

"Knowledge is power," and knowledge when accompanied by principle is a fine possession, but knowledge without it is a dangerous machinery for evil-doing, as newspaper reports too often testify.

In French schools of a corresponding class the children are taught, in addition to reading, writing, arithmetic, and the usual course, the art of dressmaking, cutting out, cooking, laundry

work, and even window-cleaning. A very admirable article by Mrs. Sanford appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* (June, 1892) treating upon this subject.

The late highly-gifted Matthew Arnold, once an inspector of primary schools, remarked at one of his visitations, "The one word which I feel disposed to keep perpetually repeating for my own benefit and for that of others is this—'Simplicity.'" "Could it not be arranged," says the writer of the article in which the quotation appears, "that whenever instructions are sent from the Central Department to the Board Schools Mr. Arnold's suggestive words should be printed as a motto?"

But of all things necessary to be taught in Board Schools (and other schools besides) is the art of book-keeping, or keeping accounts. The newspaper revelations too often point to the necessity of this instruction. A man may be honest enough, but in these days of enlightenment it is highly necessary that he should be able to prove himself so in plain black and white. "Give an account of thy stewardship" is a charge to all men now as in the days of old 'twas preached from Holy Writ.

Now let us imagine that twelve o'clock has struck and we are out of school. Whither shall we wend our way for a little physical exercise?

Taking the public road westward we shall soon reach New Barn Lane, where Cromwell's phantom coach with six headless bodies was supposed to appear. This lane, turning off to the left, divides Spinney Farm from the Bredes and leads down to a gate, and rounding the corner a stile, both conducting to a bank which commands the Fenland proper—that portion of primeval Fen unique in England.

Now view with me the left side of the bank
(How silent is the water, cold and dank !);
Behold the water lilies, sweet and fair,
Which never look as beautiful elsewhere ;
Glance o'er the arrowhead and grass-fringed edge
Into the world of rushes, reeds, and sedge ;¹
Look at the wealth of flowers of every tint,
The pink valerian, the pale wild-mint,
The yellow ragwort, rivalling loose-strife !
The air which gives these health imparts new life.
Take with you basket, nay, a box maybe,
And on the green milk-parsley larvæ see.
Methinks I hear you now exultant cry,
"I've found a very famous butterfly !"
Look at that student from a distant town,
Lately at Cambridge, free of "cap and gown."
He has an eye for conquest, I've no doubt.
With vasculum or basket slung about,
He wends his way among the boggy turns,
And gathers hardy flowers and tender ferns,
While butterflies of gorgeous colours bright
Flit round about him in the sun and light ;
Discovers willows of distinctive kind,
Where migratory birds a perch oft find.

¹ *Cladium Mariscus*.

But oh ! what span of sky and azure rare,
And oh ! the gorgeous sunsets witnessed there !
A windmill once upon the bank's green side
Had graced the way and been the traveller's guide,
But Science now has swept it from the way
Anear the stile where gipsies oft would stay
And pitch their tent again and yet again
Upon the greensward touching Upware Lane.

These Bohemian guests, who used to be specially fond of the Avenue, made in their settlement a somewhat formidable gathering (remote from the village and even from the farms belonging to the hamlet) with their dark, swarthy looks and fierce, dark eyes ; but we know of nothing worse in their conduct than suspicious visitations to the hen-roosts, which were always to these people within measurable distance.

But gipsy encampments are now a thing of the past. It is many years since any tableau of the kind has been seen in Upware Lane.

But to return to the village proper. Retracing our steps along this green bank, with the open fields of Spinney lately flush with corn upon our left, we reach again the stile we crossed before, and keeping straight on for about half-way through the drove we gain another stile on the left. This conducts us through the Bredes to Wicken. But there is another way into the Fen down Lode Lane, where hedges on either side throw out in summer-time wild roses and

other floral sweets. A group of houses is reached at the end, beyond which boats lie at anchor ready to take the traveller, if on pleasure bent, along the waterway which leads to Upware. There are lilies in abundance shining through the rushes which fringe the stream on the right, and beyond these spread out the hundred or two of acres of primitive Fen mentioned before when we were on the other side. A bank to the left of this stream forms a towing-path for Mr. George Butcher's donkey, who nobly bears his part in these excursions. Beyond the bank stretch out the low Fen flats belonging to Burwell parish, and huge stacks of turf greet the eye. Mr. George Butcher's father was for many years clerk at Wicken Church, and his large family have turned out creditably. He is a turf-merchant besides; and further on we meet his rival, Mr. Mark Bailey, in a large boat—another most worthy man and turf-merchant. His huge cargo looks formidable in the narrow stream, but Mark pulls up in time, and we go on our way rejoicing. Mark holds the unique position of having been the last among a long list of church clerks who led the responses bravely, but now we have a verger, and church clerks number with the institutions of bygone days. At length we emerge from the narrow stream and get into Burwell Lode, which leads to

Burwell and is a wider course, but not prettier in prospect than is that vast area of reeds and rushes which is so pleasant at the time of singing birds and blooming Fen flowers, and at eventide, when the air is full of calm and soothing influences. This experience is to come when we have had tea at "Five Miles from Anywhere," originally known as the Lord Nelson Inn. So we quit our barge just before the sluice, and passing Burwell Engine, which for above half a century has done its part in the drainage of the Fen, we reach the inn without fear of the water with which our beverage is to be concocted. The donkey is left to browse by the bank-side with two or three goats (distinctly immigrants), and George undertakes to look after the wraps, the huge bunches of water-lilies, and other trophies, such as the arrowhead (*sagittaria sagittifolia*), the club-rush (*scorpus selaceous*), and we know that he will be faithful. In a field on the right-hand side of the bank approaching the inn several specimens of Roman pottery have been discovered. A curious jug was turned up in the "forties" by Tom Howlett when ploughing the land, which had originally been a pasture field, and Roman coins have been discovered. A short time ago a bronze Roman coin was found of the Emperor Domitian, who commenced to reign A.D. 96, and has been

mentioned by the Wicken correspondent of the *Cambridgeshire Times*, who says: "The edge is very much defaced ; on the obverse is the head with neck bare, the reverse has a figure standing erect with right hand resting upon a staff." In the field opposite that just mentioned, but parallel with the lane beyond the corner of the inn, there is a good-sized mound which might have been a Roman encampment or perhaps an earthwork thrown up by some previous invaders of the soil, and around it there is a fosse or valley similar to that in the parish of Burwell. I have read somewhere that most probably each summit became a sort of watch-tower from whence invading forces could by means of beacon lights communicate with each other. There is an old farmhouse in this field which has braved many a winter frost and summer sun. It used to be the tithe farm until the Tithe Commutation Act came into operation in 1837. Whilst waiting for the tea which has been ordered we linger about, and an inquiring youth asks how the tithe was taken—"in kind" or determined. The reader shall know too. At harvest-time, in the recollection of the writer, old Clerk Bullman lent his services, also Robert Canham, gardener, and Robert Gilbert. These men, having been accommodated with ponies, rode round to the different farms and placed a bough in every tenth sheaf. It

then became the property of the farmer, which he in due time had carted away and which, of course, he had paid for in rent. And now having entered the inn through a porch we find our tea spread out on a long table in a large room, the bow-window of which overlooks the classic river known to most Cambridge undergraduates. Beyond lie cultivated fields, which were formerly flooded with water and skimmed over by wild-fowl. Now the railway runs across the path of the wild duck. This was opened some time in the forties and speedily annihilated the old packet-boat which used to ply between Lynn and Cambridge, calling at Ely on the way, and bringing various commodities to the different farms upon the route in return for the eggs and the golden butter made one yard long. There is an old farmhouse visible from the inn, from whence the earliest grass-butter used to issue forth in spring. This farm is situate just at the corner turning into Waterbeach Drove, and was long occupied by one William Feast. Good old Mrs. Feast of honoured memory (and who knew more about farming than half the men in the county) used to make the butter herself, and the result was that the article was in every sense of the word worthy of a Feast.

On the left-hand side of the bank will be seen

the tall chimneys of the engines which have done good service as agents of the Bedford Level Drainage system. One already mentioned belongs to Burwell, the other to Swaffham, and beyond are Fen farms, which are also in the parish of Swaffham. You might go from Upware to Waterbeach, which is only a few miles off, by a pleasant walk along the river-bank, or drive through the old droves and by favour of Mr. Dimmock inspect Denny Abbey, which was formerly a convent of Benedictines of the Knights Templars. When their order was dissolved early in the fourteenth century, their estates were granted by Pope Clement V. to the Knights Hospitallers, who regranted Denny Abbey to Edward II. Edward III. bestowed it on Mary de St. Paul Countess of Pembroke, who founded a nunnery there, where, upon her death, which occurred in 1376, she was interred. This Countess of Pembroke founded Pembroke College (one of the oldest colleges in Cambridge), and was greatly inclined to further religious objects, induced by the loss of her husband, Aymer de Valence, who was murdered in France in 1324. There is now at Denny on the site of the old abbey a commodious dwelling-house. The transept and chapel of the refectory are used as a barn, another result of the ruthless hand of time. This is the abbey supposed to have been con-

nected with Spinney by a subterranean passage, but the idea needs further development. There was said to be (but it is a digression) a similar passage in Barnwell Priory, to which priory were translated the canons of St. Giles of the Augustinian order, who had been settled A.D. 1092 by Picot, Lord of Bourne in this county, at their house near the Castle of Cambridge. This passage was thought to connect the priory and the Benedictine nunnery of St. Rhadegund, on which Jesus College was founded.

But our young people have no desire for such an enterprise at present. The visitors' book at the inn affords sufficient interest to some, or listening to the landlady as she gives her recollections of Mr. Richard Fielder, erstwhile King of Upware, who baptized anew the Lord Nelson Inn, now generally spoken of as "Five Miles from 'Anywhere,'" whilst others go off in a small boat in the direction of Ely, whose minster rises fair and bold in the distance.

And then, as all things come to an end, the time arrives to regain the barge and turn homewards.

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VII

"Standing four-square to all the winds that blow."
TENNYSON.

THERE is a pleasant walk in summer-time across the fields from Wicken to Soham, skirting the mere farms, where probably big ships used to come many centuries ago. Conjectures have been raised concerning the name of Soham, whether it were from Seham in relation to the briny deep or the episcopal see started by St. Felix ; but we will take what is tangible, for as no man lives to himself, but each life is interwoven with that of others, so Soham must possess an interest to the inhabitants of surrounding villages. A short time ago the writer was taken to a room at the Fountain Inn opposite the churchyard, the walls of which are lined with panels of old oak carving and bear, if the remembrance be correct, a representation of the Virgin Queen in the centre of the mantelpiece. * Now sometime in the thirties a dancing class was held in a room above the one just mentioned, which was attended by some of the pupils from Miss Wilkins' school for young

ladies (including the writer) in the same lane, but we have no recollection of having at that time heard of this curious specimen of old carving at the Fountain Inn. Well, the Tudor period seems long ago, but what shall we say of the epoch when Soham had a Saxon monastery and was an episcopal see of the East Angles, or how write about the Norsemen or Danes who came to Soham and burnt the church with many victims inside it? St. Felix himself had a history somewhat unique. Between the years 575 to 792 there were fourteen Saxon kings who reigned over East Anglia, and it was Sigebert, the fifth of these kings, who, having fled into France, in consequence of some family dispute, was when there prevailed on by Felix, a Burgundian, to embrace the Christian faith; and in return he invited Felix to introduce that religion into East Anglia, and made him the first bishop of that see, which was probably the most ancient foundation in the diocese of Norwich. Soon after the see was removed to Dunwich, where St. Felix was buried in A.D. 647, but his body was afterwards removed and buried in the monastery of Soham. In 870 the Danes under Ingvar and Hubba burnt the great church and killed the monks, a great and famous convent of whose order flourished at that time under Abbot Winifrid. Some time after this, in the time of King Canute, Athelstane,

Abbot of Ramsay, is said to have discovered the bones of St. Felix, and having conveyed them to Ramsay they were there solemnly enshrined.

Happily in the peaceful reign of Queen Victoria we have no fear of the foreigner coming to invade our shores, nor of the need to guard like that our precious dead.

Yet the monks of old, though self-denying in many points, are not often thought of as total abstainers, rather the reverse. Their Chartreuse is a very famous concoction. Here is something suggestive of the time¹—which was not that of total abstinence :—

THE CONVENT CELLAR.

(Friar Claus descending with a light and a basket of empty flagons.)

I always enter this sacred place,
With a thoughtful, solemn and rev'rent pace,
Pausing long enough on each stair,
To utter an ejaculatory prayer
And a benediction on the vines
That produce these various sorts of wines.
For my part I am well content,
That we have got through with the tedious Lent.
Fasting is all very well for those
Who have to contend with invisible foes,
But I'm quite sure it does not agree
With a quiet peaceable man like me,
Who am not of that nervous and meagre kind,
That are always distress in body and mind,
And at times it really does me good,
To come down among the brotherhood

¹ See Longfellow's "Golden Legend."

Dwelling for ever underground,
Silent, contemplative, round and round.
Each one old, and brown with mould,
But filled to the lips with the ardour of youth,
With the latent power and love of truth,
And with virtues fervent and manifold.

LONGFELLOW.

Next to Ely Cathedral the most noticeable object for miles around is the fine tower belonging to the parish church of Soham :

“Standing four-square to all the winds that blow.”

The church itself is a handsome and capacious building situate near the spot on which that of the old monastery came to such a disastrous termination at the hands of the cruel Danes of long ago.

However, since a most important national event—to quote from our great and greatly lamented Laureate, not long since laid to rest (near his distinguished brother-poet of the century) in our national mausoleum for the great—“We are all of us Danes” in our love for the sweet lady who as Princess of Wales won, and as our gracious Queen Alexandra will undoubtedly keep, all English hearts.

Then Canute was a bright exception to those fierce Norsemen who came with such devastating force into this neighbourhood. Canute the good King of England and Denmark who about A.D. 1003 caused the idol temples which his

father had erected to Odin to be destroyed, encouraged Christianity, and sent Christian teachers to spread religion over his native country. He built many churches (and cathedrals it is said) and tried to rule his subjects well, according to the laws of the Gospel.

He was in every way so superior to the kings of Europe that his foolish courtiers one day told him he was so powerful that he could command heaven and earth.

The way in which he afterwards rebuked them is too well known to need repetition here.

Canute was very fond of the Fen country, which at that time was a rich and fertile plain, with grazing cattle and beautiful trees, and much like his own loved Denmark. He was very fond of poetry, and composed many ballads, which were sung by the people after his death. One of these songs suggests a journey to Ely, which he approached by the river.

He described the sweet effect of the sound of the evening chant of the monks as he was in his boat. Only one verse of the ballad is in existence :

"Sweetly sang the monks of Ely,
When King Canute rode thereby.
Row, knights, row, row gently on
And let us hear their even-song."

Another time he determined to keep the Feast of Candlemas in Ely (February 2nd). He found all

the meres frozen over, and there were no roads to travel on.

His courtiers begged him to put off his visit to Ely and to keep the Festival in some other place, but nothing would persuade him to give it up. He proposed to go over Soham Mere, which was then one large sheet of ice, saying if any one would go before and show him the way he would follow. The courtiers and soldiers hesitated and were confused. But there chanced to be standing among the crowd a peasant, a native of the Isle of Ely, nicknamed "Pudding" from his stoutness. This fat man stood forth and said he would show the king the way to Ely. "Then," said Canute, "go on in the name of our Lady, for if the ice on Soham Mere can bear so fat a man as thee, it will not break under a thin man like me."

So "Pudding" set off skating, followed by the king and his courtiers, and after many slips and tumbles they all arrived safe, and Canute kept the Feast of Candlemas with the monks of Ely. In recompense for this Pudding was made a free man, and he and his descendants held freehold land in the Isle of Ely for many generations.

Well, here we are at Ely with the good King Canute, but I must take you farther back than that period before bringing my narration again to times present, and for that purpose begin another chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER VIII

ELY

"Sacred in its gray respect
From the jealousies of sect."

WHITTIER.

THE derivation of the name of this ancient city, built upon a hill, above the often wave-washed meadows, is said to have been either from the fish which abound in the river, or from the British word *Helig*, meaning willow, which is to be found in such abundance on its banks, and which in summer-time with its bushy, silvery head has quite a beauty of its own.

Well, Ely as a town is not strikingly remarkable, neither does it betray any of that bustling life and energy which are so characteristic of most towns nowadays. It seems to possess a steady-going jog-trot way of its own, and certainly for about half a century the chief event of public importance has been the railway, which was opened sometime in the forties. And yet could some of those people of a bygone age

come back again, they would recognise greater changes than seem to meet the gaze of the ordinary observer ; they would notice the good supply of water and gas (to say nothing of electricity, the telegraph, and postal service) which people of the present day, from never having known the want of, are scarcely able to value enough. A former historian says :—

“Though there are in this city many excellent springs, yet the inhabitants are obliged to send for most of the water they make use of for washing and brewing down to the river. As the hill is steep it is carried in a pair of leather bags on horseback, by which many industrious poor have got a very comfortable subsistence.”

Also :—

“In the conveniency of sending and receiving letters and small parcels, the post sets out every Sunday morning about six o'clock, every Tuesday and Thursday about two in the afternoon from the Lamb Inn, to the post-house in Cambridge, and returns to the same on Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday about six at night.” And now in less than a century since that period Ely has several deliveries, and collections of letters and parcels during the six days of the working week. Besides this, instead of the present convenient railway communication for passengers and goods, it is further recorded :—

"And for the conveniency of passengers and heavy goods, to and from Cambridge, a passage boat goes every Tuesday and Friday morning from Ely, and sets out on its return on Wednesday and Saturday noon from Cambridge. The distance by water is about twenty miles, and is generally done in about six hours." This passage or packet boat has been mentioned before. Now the railway system crowns the new arrangements in ordinary traffic, as does the reservoir (a striking object above the fields), the present water supply.

Mr. Aspland, who, as already shown, wrote facetiously of "the neighbourhood" in the second decade of the century, says :—

"Ely is famed for monks and nuns,
For cherries and three-cornered buns."

The cherry orchards are very fresh in memory, and old historians mention the large quantities of asparagus grown in this humid atmosphere. Now we hear of jam factories and leather factories, in addition to the wicker-work which still bears its part in a branch of industry. Of paper-making, which formerly obtained, we now hear nothing. A great trade in wildfowl was long ago (before the Bedford Level Drainage system) a considerable source of profit. Camden says :—

"Wildfowl are taken in decoys, into which they are led by tame ducks, that are trained for that purpose, and in the Isle of Ely there is such plenty that three thousand couple are said to be sent to London every week, and there is one decoy near Ely that lets for five hundred pounds a year."

Camden also states with regard to the fields around: "The dry and barren parts have been greatly improved by sowing the grass called saintfoin (holy grass), having been first brought into Europe from Palestine."

Formerly there was a market at Ely on Saturdays, but now it is held on Thursdays, and principally for the sale of corn and cattle, and "Ely good beef" has long been a proverbial expression.

But the chief glory of Ely is its cathedral. It rises from the central base of the city, crowning the hilltop, a monument worthy of all time, and dead or dull must be the soul which can approach that point in the neighbourhood without feelings of awe and veneration. The ancient and magnificent pile is the outcome of St. Etheldreda's famous monastery, which she founded in 673. This princess was one of the daughters of Anna, King of East Anglia, who is described as a good man, but much tried by Penda, King of Mercia, with whom he had many wars. St.

Etheldreda was born at Exning, in Suffolk, and grew up a pious maiden, always wishing to devote herself to a religious life, but her inclinations were overruled, and she became the wife of Tonbert, King of the Fenmen, who died three years afterwards, having bequeathed to Etheldreda the whole of the Isle of Ely. It seems very strange that this princess, with all her old predilections in force, should again allow herself to be persuaded to accept the matrimonial chain. She must surely have been of a very yielding disposition, too soft and amiable to give her northern wooer the refusal which would have averted the subsequent snapping asunder of bonds which, with recurring predilections, had become too burdensome for her to bear. However this might be she became the wife of Egfrid, son of Oswy, King of Northumberland, who afterwards succeeded to the kingdom, and with whom Etheldreda lived twelve years, when, in order to devote herself to a religious life, she prevailed on the king to set her free. But it is more than probable that he repented, as there is a sculptural representation in the cathedral of the queen and her attendant nuns being pursued by Egfrid, and of a marvellous inundation of water, which intervened between him and the rock to which the queen had betaken herself. That the marriage-tie should have been made so light of is the one drawback in the character of a

woman and a queen so eminently religious in every other point of view, and it is the more remarkable in a daughter of the Church to which she professedly belonged, and which holds the law of divorce more rigidly than is always the case in other visible Churches in our own day. But money, a potent quantity with the god of this world, too often becomes a very potent factor even in the observances and indulgences of the religious order, and it would be idle to speculate further in the matter, so far as it concerns St. Etheldreda. Facts such as are known to us must suffice. Her life was one of great holiness. She ruled her house in all wisdom, and gained the esteem of the country people around, which was shared by the inmates of the monastery (who comprised both sexes), whom she showed by her example how to live, and in the end how to die. She endowed the monastery with the whole of the Isle of Ely, and was installed its first abbess. Her sister Sexburga succeeded as abbess. She was a widow, and was in turn followed by her daughter Erminilda, widow of Wulfruc, King of Mercia. The fourth abbess was Wesburga, a daughter of Erminilda, and is the last whose name is recorded, although the abbacy, or office of abbess, lasted in regular succession for two hundred years.

Etheldreda was interred in the graveyard of the

monastery, but afterwards her remains were translated to the church which she had founded.

The monastery was destroyed by the Danes in 870, and a whole century elapsed before its restoration, when Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, refounded the monastery at the suggestion of "Edgar the Peaceful," after which it was put under the Benedictine rule and the sexes were separated.

It is not necessary to give a list of the abbots who followed each other in the monastery.

Thurstan, the last Saxon abbot, surrendered the monastery to William the Conqueror in 1071, when some of the Fen lands were given to the Normans, a part of which were afterwards recovered for the monastery by Simeon, ninth abbot, a relative of the Conqueror. This Simeon laid the foundation of the present cathedral (A.D. 1083), which was afterwards proclaimed a marvel of architectural skill; and it was in the time of Thomas of Ely (A.D. 1106) that the remains of Etheldreda and her canonised successors were placed behind the high altar in the new presbytery with great pomp.

In 1109 the abbacy was changed into a bishopric, up to which time it had been under the spiritual jurisdiction of the see of Lincoln.

Hervé was its first bishop.

Particulars concerning the architectural beauties

of the cathedral may be acquired by means of an excellent guide, which can be purchased at a bookseller's quite near.

Entering by the western porch or Galilee the visitor will have a fine *coup d'œil* before him, and if he proceed to the Lantern he will have reached what the late Sir Gilbert Scott considered one of the finest points in the edifice. (This Lantern gave Sir Christopher Wren his idea for the dome of St. Paul's.) From thence the choir, with the beautiful Purbeck marbles, will claim his attention. The late Professor Freeman (an undoubted authority) declared that the Early English and the Decorated work in the choir of Ely Cathedral are the finest specimens of those styles in the kingdom. The reredos, which was the gift of John Dunn Gardiner, Esq., was intended as a memorial to his first wife at a cost of £4,000. The octagon, though of unequal proportions in width, contains four windows of especial interest, depicting historical scenes ranging from the time of St. Etheldreda, where she, as queen, is represented; also Anna, her father, and her two husbands, Tonbert and Egfrid, whilst in another tier she appears as abbess, with Wilfrid, Bishop of York, and other religious followers belonging to the early days of the monastery. A second window continues the idea of that epoch, whilst the north-west window represents some of

the Norman kings, beginning with the Conqueror. But the one which must possess for us paramount interest belongs to our Victorian era, the time in which we have played our own part in "life's little day," and the historic personages, whose public and private life have to loyal hearts been only second to their own personal and family interests. There is the Queen in her coronation robes, and the late lamented Prince Consort wearing the robes belonging to the office of Chancellor of the University of Cambridge ; Dr. Turton, probably the bishop of that time, and the late Dr. Peacock, who, as dean, did so much towards the restoration of the cathedral. Then there are the figures of King Edward III. and Queen Philippa, who reigned when the Octagon was built, and Bishop Hotham and Prior Crauden, the great officers of the cathedral at that period. The queen assisted in the cost of this window, as did the bishop and dean mentioned before.

With the excellent Guide, which can be procured at Mr. Tyndale's for a shilling, one need not attempt to describe the other fine windows or principal objects of the building, but just mention a few features which seem to possess especial claim to one's attention.

The Lady Chapel (now most frequently called Trinity Church) is one of them. It is reached through a doorway at the north-east corner of the

transept, and is spoken of as "one of the most beautiful and elaborate specimens of the Decorated style in England," and is said to be "the widest single-span church in the kingdom," being 46 feet in width, 100 feet in length, and 60 feet in height to the centre of the ceiling. The first stone of the building was laid by Alan de Walsingham in 1321, and was finished A.D. 1349. A visit to the Lady Chapel should on no account be omitted. Then, too, the chapels of Bishop Alcock and Bishop West, situated respectively in the north and south corners of the choir. The latter (who lived in the time of Henry VIII.) was interred in the chapel which bears his name. "He was," says a historian, "a man of great hospitality, giving daily at his gate warm meat and drink to two hundred poor people, and distributing divers sums of money to the poor in times of dearth. He ordered this inscription to be put on his tombstone :—

"Of your charity pray for the soul of Nicholas West, sometime bishop of this See, and for all Christian souls, in the which prayer he hath granted to every person so doing 40 days of pardon for every time they shall so pray."

"His death was said to be hastened by Henry VIII.'s displeasure towards him for being opposed to his divorce from his first queen."

Bishop Alcock, at one time Master of the Rolls,

Chancellor of England, was translated to Ely in 1486, after having in turn been Bishop of Rochester and of Salisbury. He built a stately hall in the episcopal palace of Ely, besides the chapel already mentioned, in which his remains were placed on his decease. He was the founder of Jesus College, Cambridge, and is said from a child "to have been given to the study of learning and of godliness."

When King Henry VIII. converted the prior and monks into a dean and secular canons, he settled on them, without diminution, the entire revenues belonging to the convent. A historian says :—

"1541. The King erects the Dean and Chapter of St. Peter's, Ely, and grants to them the manors of Brame, Witchford, Maxwell, Sutton, Meldreth, Caxton, Cottingham, &c., &c. Lynn, and a close in Holborn in Middlesex, near the Bishop of Ely's manor there ; also an Inn called the Bell Inn, in Newgate Street," at which the writer a short time ago had luncheon, and was shown a curious old silver dish which had borne part in a dinner once partaken of there by Queen Elizabeth, and is often shown to strangers now.

In order to view the remaining walls of the old monastic buildings the visitor should leave the cathedral through the porch on the south side, and at the commencement of his exit he will find

himself by the wall enclosing the garden of the deanery, which is interesting from having been the site of the refectory of the convent. Prior Crauden's Chapel adjoins the deanery, and, like it, is full of historic associations, as are the residences of the canons. The grounds in which they are situated are called the College, and the park comprised within its boundary slopes gently down, affording to the eye a freshness of beauty much enhanced by the sombre background of the time-worn, picturesquely irregular buildings which almost encircle it and which are held in the closest veneration by the people of the town. A short avenue leads from the pavement beyond the wall of these residences to "Ely Porta" or Porter's Lodge, which is a convenient exit for getting away to the station, or of turning from thence to the right up the gallery, where the Bishop's Palace will be reached. There used to be a covered way or gallery leading from the episcopal residence to the cathedral. Hence the name. The palace, which is of commodious size, has a picturesque aspect with its sober tints of time-worn yellow and brown colouring—well set off by the "Green" which fronts it, and is quite in keeping with its ecclesiastical surroundings. St. Mary's Church is just beyond it, and the noble western front of the cathedral on its right.

Besides this palace, and that in Holborn, which derived its name of Ely Place from thence, the Bishops of Ely had a palace at Hatfield belonging to their manor of Hatfield, which had been granted to the monastery of Ely in the reign of King Edgar, and upon the creation of the diocese of Ely in 1108 it became one of the residences of the bishops, and imparted the name of Bishop Hatfield to the village.

But a change was effected in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who admired the situation so much, that she effected the alienation of Hatfield from the Bishops, and it became a Royal residence until the reign of James I., who presented it to Sir Robert Cecil (afterwards Earl of Salisbury) in exchange for Theobalds in Hertfordshire.

This powerful queen, we are told, made other ecclesiastical changes by taking into her hands other manors. She granted to Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely, the tenths of his diocese, and the impropriation of certain places. Queen Elizabeth gave the palace in Ely Place, Holborn, to Sir Christopher Hatton. Hence Hatton Garden.

Ely had the honour of sending to Westminster Abbey (our now most jealously guarded national mausoleum) a Bishop, previously Archdeacon Thomas Thirlby, of Ely, where he remained ten years, but in consequence of the dissolution of that bishopric he was the last

as he had been the first Bishop of Westminster. In 1550 Bishop Thirlby was translated to Norwich.

Altogether St. Etheldreda's cathedral city has held many high privileges, for on the separation of the see from Lincoln (A.D. 1109) there were great revenues appropriated to it, and the bishops became vested with the rights of a county palatine in the Isle of Ely, which they held until the restraining power of Henry VIII. reached them.

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER IX

"Brother, thou hast gone before us."—MILMAN.

WE will now, I think, retrace our steps eastward, and take a brief glance at the villages lying south-east of Soham. The late highly esteemed Vicar of Fordham, the Rev. John Bell, M.A., has in a small pamphlet given many interesting particulars of the place, over which he held pastoral rule for a great many years. I would recommend all persons interested in this village to purchase his little work if possible, since his scholarly ability and probity must confirm his authority. Fordham is one of sixteen parishes which had never belonged to the diocese of Lincoln. Soham, Wicken, Burwell, &c., are included in the number which now belong to the diocese of Ely. "Fordham," states Mr. Bell, "gives its name to the Deanery in which it stands. It is five miles N.W. of Newmarket and nine S.E. of Ely. There are about 4,050 acres in it, chiefly arable, with a small portion of pasture, and woodland. A river with a never-

failing supply of water runs through the village. The name of this stream is the Snail, having its chief source in some powerful springs near the village of Snailwell. The passage or ford across this stream doubtless gave the name to the parish. The Living is a discharged Vicarage, of which the Masters and Fellows of Jesus College, Cambridge, are the Patrons. The Vicarial tithes were commuted for land in 1809. The Glebe comprises rather more than 270 acres. The Bishop of Ely was the Impropiator until it passed successively into the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the late William Dunn Gardiner, Esq., of Fordham Abbey. The parish church is dedicated to St. Peter, which fact is still perpetuated by the celebration of the village wakes on June 29th, or St. Peter's Day. The Vicarial preferment was given to Jesus College, along with three other livings, by Bishop Thirlby, mentioned in the account of Ely. The parish church is a handsome structure. The chancel is Early English, with a Decorated East window. The nave has five arches, the columns of which are some of them of Barnack¹ stone, and the others of Clunch. The lower is Early P., with a good West window beautifully restored. The North doorway of the nave is well moulded with E. E.

¹ Barnack stone is a product of Northamptonshire.

shafts of Purbeck marble, and opens into the room of the Lady Chapel. The trees round the churchyard were planted by order of Mr. Dillamore Fyson, Churchwarden in 1830-1831. Mr. Eyre Coote, a farmer of Fordham, bequeathed by Will £500 for the further repairs of the Church. The organ was presented by the late William Dunn Gardiner, Esq., in 1854. The Lady Chapel was also restored by W. Dunn Gardiner, Esq., at a cost of about £400. A stained-glass window has been contributed to the Church by Mr. Winch of Petersham to the memory of his wife, formerly Miss Ellen Bland, of Fordham. The West window was restored and filled with stained glass, towards which and other repairs the Rev. Tansley Hall, Rector of Boylestone, gave £300. The subject of the window is the Transfiguration as given by St. Luke, and executed by Messrs. Clayton & Bell, and is a Memorial of his mother-in-law, the late Mary Hyde Dix. A private chapel, forming an aisle on the south side of the chancel, to correspond with the organ chamber, and with a view to retain the old symmetry of the Church, was kindly built by the Lay Rector, William Dunn Gardiner, Esq. This and other repairs cost £650. A handsome and costly pulpit was presented by the late Mr. Townsend, Senr., of Fordham. The parochial register of Fordham was begun in 1567. The death of Queen Elizabeth is there recorded,

and a visit paid to the place by her successor, James I., who

“‘Did hunt the hare with his own hounds in our fields of Fordham, and did kill her near a place called Blacklands, and afterwards did take his repast in the said field at a bush near unto King’s Path.’

“This King visited Newmarket almost every year of his reign, and sometimes twice or thrice, having bought a house of Lord O’Brien, Earl of Thomond. Not being suitable for the King, it was afterwards greatly enlarged. After James’s death, the King’s house at Newmarket underwent various changes. It was visited several times by Charles I. His last visit was when he was brought thither as a prisoner from Holdenby in Northamptonshire by the Parliamentary army. Charles II. (as related in an earlier part of this history) was in the habit of visiting Newmarket. The house occupied during the race meeting by George IV. (when Prince Regent) was only pulled down in 1862, and an Independent Chapel erected on its site. The Royal Stables, purchased and restored by one of the trainers, are still in existence. The visit of King James to Fordham is commemorated on a beam in the south aisle by a carved representation of two hounds pursuing a hare.”

So much do we learn from the record left by

the late Rev. John Bell, M.A. It is left to others to record how long and nobly he fulfilled his ministerial duties at Fordham, the great interest he evinced in the youth of the parish, oftentimes taking them long excursions in the summer, by which means he increased their happiness and widened their intelligence. Previous to Mr. Bell's vicariate the village had known a very different state of things. Mr. Bell died almost in harness, since he only lived a few days after performing his last ministerial duty. The writer of this narrative had not the pleasure of personally knowing Mr. Bell, but nevertheless finds it interesting to say thus much of one whose memory will long remain fragrant in the little village of Fordham. By the by, the population there has rather increased of late years. In 1871 it contained 1,266 inhabitants. In 1891 it was found to have increased to the number of 18, being then 1,284, and with the fine nurseries of Messrs. Townsend and Bland, it is to be hoped that the place may go on increasing.

The Rev. Mr. Ivatt has lately succeeded to the vicarage of Fordham, and this year has witnessed the opening of the Hayward Institute—a boon which deserves grateful recognition and appreciation by the inhabitants—spirited though they be on their own account.

Fordham is also to be congratulated upon

having so nobly assisted Miss Janet Aspland, of Croydon, in her efforts to raise a memorial window and gravestone to the late Mr. James Reynolds Withers, the Cambridgeshire poet, which were brought to such a successful issue. Mr. Withers resided the greater part of his life at Fordham, where, in addition to writing beautiful verse, he earned for himself the character of an honest man and a moralist.

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER X

"Hope be thy joy and probity thy skill."
YOUNG.

"NEWMARKET," says Camden, "notwithstanding its name, is of considerable antiquity, for in the time of Edward III. the Bishop of Carlisle, who was afterwards so troublesome to Henry IV., was called Thomas of Newmarket. It is 60 miles from London, and consists principally of one street, which is long and well built, the south side of it only being in this county, the north side is in Suffolk. The air of this place is very healthy, and the heath which surrounds the town is remarkable for the finest course in England, where there are horse-races in April, July, and October." The town was half burnt down in 1683, but was soon rebuilt. This fire, though a misfortune to the town, is said to have occasioned the happy defeat of the Rye House Plot (Charles II. and the Duke of York being then at Newmarket and expected to return by way of Rye House,

which was about two miles from Hoddesdon in Herts). "The oppressive measures of the Royal brothers," says a historian, "had so greatly agitated the nation : and meetings were held by the supporters of liberty, on true constitutional principles, to consider of the most eligible method of opposing the further encroachments of despotism and bigotry." The subsequent conduct of the Duke of York when King produced the glorious Revolution.

Charles II., when at Newmarket, was in the habit of "touching persons" afflicted with the plague. There is an instance of this ceremony recorded in the Journal describing the visit of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, whose visit to Chippenham has already been quoted. Perhaps it may interest the reader to hear an account of it, as well as to contrast that epoch with the Victorian of our own day. "The Duke left Chippenham near noon, and returned by way of Newmarket. Before entering the town he alighted from his carriage, and went on foot with his attendants to the King's residence, where he was introduced into his Majesty's chamber, who was waiting there till everything was prepared for the ceremony which he is accustomed to perform publicly every Friday, that of touching for the King's Evil, according to the ancient usage of the first Catholic Kings of England,

which was handed down to their successors, continued after the *apostacy*, and preserved to the time of the present King. When his Majesty was informed that all was ready, he went from his chamber into a room adjoining, where was placed on a table a cushion on which lay the prayer-book appointed by the Anglican ritual for the use of his Majesty. As soon as he appeared and at a signal given by him, the two assistant ministers, dressed in their surplices, began the prayers, with a great appearance of devotion, his Highness standing while they were read in another room, from which, when the service was finished, he passed into the room, in which those who were afflicted with the King's Evil were assembled. A carpet was spread upon the floor, and upon it was a seat on which the King seated himself, and certain invocations in the English language taken from the prayer-book, having been read by one of the ministers, his Majesty began the ceremony of touching the patients in the part affected. These were conducted into the King's presence one at a time, and as they knelt before him, he touched them with both his hands ; after which, without interfering with the others who came after them, each returned to his former situation. This being over, the minister, kneeling with all the bystanders, the King alone remaining seated, repeated some

other prayers, after which, all rising, the diseased came in the same order as before to his Majesty, who put round their necks a ribbon of an azure colour, from which was suspended a medallion of gold stamped with his own image, in shape and weight resembling an Hungarian sequin. The whole ceremony being ended, the King returned to his chamber, and his Highness to his quarters, and dined as usual." The Tuscan Prince seems thoroughly to have enjoyed his visit to Newmarket, and of course treats of the principal amusements, and as if the races then on had been organised for his benefit. Mention is made of "coursing the hare," and of going in pursuit of the birds called "dottrel," which in size and shape resemble a very large lark. On another occasion he mentions that the King and Duke rode out on horseback to a place a little distance from Newmarket, in order to enjoy the game of tennis. His impatience to enter into the enjoyment of the time is thus described :—

"On the morning of the 8th his Highness impatiently endeavoured to get himself exempted from attending the usual religious service, that he might be in good time at the King's house (which, he says, in comparison with other seats of the English nobility, does not deserve the name of a Royal residence), and learnt that his Majesty

had set out on foot to take exercise beyond the town."

On receiving this information his Highness set out in the same direction, and in the same manner, with Colonel Gascoigne Sir — Castiglioni. He had not gone many paces before he met his Majesty, who returned home in a plain and simple country dress without any finery, but wearing the badges of the Order of St. George and of the Garter.

"His Highness presented himself to his Majesty, and, having exchanged compliments, accompanied him to his Residence, where they remained in conversation till the horses were got ready on which they were to ride out again into the country to take the diversion of coursing hares in those open and naked places."

His Highness seems generally to have dined in his own quarters by himself, but on one occasion a large dinner party was given by him there. Among the guests are mentioned James Duke of Ormonde, Earl of Manchester, Chamberlain, the Marquis of Blandford, Bernard Howard of Norfolk, &c., &c.

The chronicler says: "At 3 o'clock, according to the English mode of reckoning, the King and the Duke of York went from Newmarket to see the horse-races, and repaired to the place appropriated to this sport, going to a certain spot

which is nearly in the middle of the course, and there his Majesty stopped and amused himself with seeing my Lord Blandford and my Lord Germain play at bowls." He says: "The race course is a tract of ground in the neighbourhood of Newmarket, which, extending to the distance of four miles over a spacious and level meadow, covered with very short grass, is marked out by tall wooden posts painted white. These point out the road that leads directly to the goal, to which they are continued the whole way. They are placed at regular intervals from one another, and the last is distinguished by a flag mounted upon it to designate the termination of the course. . . . When the time of the races draws near the horses are fed with the greatest care, and very sparingly for the most part, in order to keep them in full vigour, and beverages composed of soaked bread and fresh eggs. Two horses only started on this occasion, one belonging to Bernard Howard of Norfolk, and the other to Sir — Elliot. They left Newmarket saddled in a very simple and light manner, after the English fashion, led by the men who were to ride them, dressed in taffeta of different colours. That of Howard being white, and that of Elliot green. When they reached the place where they were to start they mounted, and, loosening the reins, let the horses go, keeping them in at the beginning, that they

might not be too eager at first setting off, and their strength fail them in consequence at the more important part of the race, and the farther they advanced in the course, the more they urged them, forcing them to continue at full speed. When they came to the station where the King and the Duke of York, with some gentlemen of his Majesty's Court, were waiting on horseback till they should pass, the latter set off after them at the utmost speed, which was scarcely inferior to that of the race-horses, for the English horses, being accustomed to run, can keep up with the racers without apparent effort, and they are always trained for this purpose. Meanwhile his Highness, with his attendants and others of his Court, stopping on horseback at a little distance from the goal, rode along the meadows, waiting the arrival of the horses, and of his Majesty, who came up close after them with a numerous train of ladies and gentlemen. As the King passed his Highness bowed, and immediately turned and followed his Majesty to the goal, where trumpets and drums, which were in readiness for that purpose, sounded in applause of the conqueror, which was the horse of Sir — Elliot.

“From the race ground his Majesty, being very much heated, adjourned to his house accompanied by his Highness, after which the latter retired to his lodgings which were at the ‘Inn of

the Maidens' — almost opposite the King's house."

Of course the Grand Duke paid a visit to Ely, the (marshy) surroundings of which called forth less eulogium from him than those of Newmarket, and we read that on the conclusion of his visit he took leave of the King with every expression of acknowledgment for the goodness which his Majesty had shown over and above the tokens of his regard in going from London to Newmarket on purpose to afford him the amusement of the races.

And the "Merrie Monarch," with that courtesy which is the prerogative of kings, replied that the *incog.* which his Highness had determined never to dispense with, had obliged his Majesty to restrain from those public demonstrations which were due to his Highness, &c., &c.

Lysons says (probably about a century ago) :—

"Newmarket, an open town of about two hundred houses, partly in Cambridgeshire, is situated at the declivity of some gently rising hills which enclose a small valley and constitute a distinguishing feature in the almost level territory which lies in almost every direction around it. It has been brought into repute by the King who frequents it on account of the horse races, having been before only celebrated for the market for victuals which was held there, and

was a very abundant one. The territory belongs to my Lord Henry Bennet, Baron Arlington, who lets on a twenty-one years' lease at six shillings an acre." (The title of Arlington is, I believe, now extinct, but the name clings to many places, Arlington Street, St. James's, Piccadilly, containing the residence of Lord Salisbury and other noblemen, and at Cambridge there is Bennet Street, &c.)

Thus we see Newmarket has a long past history, and as the town grows year by year, associations thicken around it. The weekly market is held on Tuesday. Holymas Fair is an old institution, and there are many new ones, besides several churches and chapels and very good shops. The justices have a meeting or session there weekly for the administration of the law. The union (that terror of the poor) is also there, or, as they term it, the "House."

Of course the Grand Duke of Tuscany went to Cambridge, and we are told "that he was anxiously expected there in consequence of the hopes given by the two doctors who had been expressly sent to Newmarket to invite him." We cannot follow his footsteps thither, and it would occupy too much time and space to enter into the great records of this famous University. Indeed we must not travel far beyond the "Devil's Ditch," politely termed by his Highness "a rampart," about which many speculations have been raised.

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XI

"The rampart (or Devil's Ditch)
Looks down on many a brilliant race,
And many a hopeless, troubled face."

SOME suppose it to have been made as a defence by the East Anglians against the Mercians, and others that it was to keep off the encroachments of the sea, which came up to Reach, or Reche, and probably gave that name to the town, as it then was, though now it is only a hamlet of the straggling village of Burwell. Large ships used to come up to Reach. The fortification, which was at any rate a boundary of East Anglia, extends from Reche or Reach and crosses Newmarket Heath into Suffolk. A custom still prevails at Reach of the Mayor and Corporation of Cambridge going thither annually on Rogation Monday to proclaim the horse fair, which is still an important one.

"At Burwell," says Carter, "in the troublesome times of King Stephen, there was a strong castle which Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex,

attacked bravely, but lost his life in the action, being shot through the head by an arrow." The parish church of Burwell is a very handsome structure, and well worthy of a visit, as indeed may be said of many of our Cambridgeshire churches. It is recorded that in 1643 "many superstitious pictures were broken down" in the parish church of Burwell, and the hand of that terrible Earl of Manchester seems to have reached many other churches in the neighbourhood.

Among the names of inhabitants of Burwell long ago are mentioned those of Robert Gilbert, William Casebourn, William Peachey, Thomas Purr.

"A terrible fire occurred at Burwell on the evening of September 8, 1727, in a barn in which a number of persons were assembled to see a puppet-show, seventy-six of whom perished instantly, and two more died of their wounds within two days. This dismal catastrophe was occasioned by the negligence of a servant, who placed a candle in or near a heap of straw which was in the barn. Among the unhappy sufferers were several young ladies of fortune, and many children." (See Butler.)

In these days it would seem very odd to attend meetings and public amusements in a barn, for owing to a broader civilisation we have school-rooms, mission halls, and other public buildings

all over the kingdom, for which we cannot be too thankful. Doubtless education and railroads have had a great deal to do with the restlessness of the present age, but it would be well for the youth in villages to pause ere they turn their backs altogether from the neighbourhood of the plough and the anvil. Technical science may yet enable them to widen and develop home industries, for the greater temptations to youth in towns oftentimes result in their looking back to the time when long ago they dwelt in innocence and peace under the old roof-tree of their village home. Life to none is ever passed without trials. So, as the great American poet Longfellow says :—

“ Let us then be up and doing
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour, and to wait.”

But another word about Burwell. The Tiptofts, who had several manors in this county, succeeded to the estates of the Bassingbourns, whose principle seat was at the village of that name, and they had one at Burwell.

Clunch abounds in Burwell and Isleham. It was formerly very much used in churches, and has been already mentioned as used in the formation of two arches in Fordham Church.

SWAFFHAM BULBECK,

which is in the vicinity of Burwell, had formerly a Benedictine nunnery of ancient foundation dedicated to St. Mary, and granted by Henry VIII. to the Bishop of Ely in exchange. It is recorded—

“That Mr. Isaacson, minister thereof, had articles exhibited against him September 16, 1643. He was turned out by the Earl of Manchester for being zealous to put in execution Bishop Wren’s fancies (as they termed them) and in a word for his obedience to the Royal cause, and dislike to that of the Parliament, though not a syllable of this was deposed even by his enemies.” In continuation of the record it is added :—“We break down 4 crucifixes, and Christ nailed to them, and God the Father on one of them, 100 superstitious pictures and 20 cherubims, and digged down the steps, we took down 2 crosses from the steeple, and two from the churchyard and chancel.” Christopher Mitchell and Martin Appleyard, Churchwardens.

Swaffham can boast a name which has been for nearly two centuries connected with “the neighbourhood,” viz., that of Allix—Peter Allix, son of Mr. Peter Allix of the Reformed Church at Charenton, near Paris, having in 1713 been presented to the united vicarages of Swaffham Pryor and Swaffham

Bulbeck. He resigned these as well as the rectory of Dry Drayton, for Castle Camps, and became Dean of Ely in 1730. He was buried at his own desire in the church porch of Castle Camps. (See Carter.)

There is another small village or hamlet situate in the neighbourhood of Burwell and Fordham that of

LANDWADE,

which can claim to have held association with a county name for many centuries prior to that of Allix, as the Cottons were possessors of lands in this place as well as in other parts of the shire at a very early period. In 1287 Thomas Cotton, Esq., of Landwade Exning was High Sheriff of this county, and in 1722 there is a Sir John Hynde Cotton included in the list of knights of that period, and the double name was assumed in consequence of property having come by a female heir of the Hindes into the family of the Cottons of Landwade. The Cottons had also, until a few years ago, a seat at Madingley which was tenanted by the King when Prince of Wales during his University career at Cambridge. There is a pretty little church at Landwade which holds many memorials of the Cotton family.

On the north side of Fordham Church there is a road which conducts the traveller past an estate

*

or farm called Bassingbourn, which is very suggestive of a name often mentioned in this history, but instead of pausing at this spot we shall, by travelling on some two or three miles further, reach the village of—

ISLEHAM,

an agricultural village famous for its church, its peat, its farms, its orchards, and gardens, but more particularly for a very ancient as well as handsome church.

The Peytons, a Suffolk family, must have been greatly interested in this edifice, since we read that in the reign of Henry VII. much money was expended by them about it, and one Christopher Peyton raised the roof in the year 1495. The architecture partakes of the florid character of that time, the wooden roof being ornamented with roses, figures of angels, &c. On each side runs the following inscription:—"Pray for Christopher Peyton and Elizabeth his wife, and for the sowle of Thomas Peyton, Esq., and Margaret his wife, and for the sowles of the ancestres of the said Christopher Peyton, which did make this roof in the year of our Lord 1495, being the 10th year of King Henry the 7th." There are some handsome monuments in this church, and some repairs were a short time ago

needed to be done to the tower, for which it is to be hoped the means will be forthcoming.

There is a curious old barn belonging to the place which is highly suggestive of monastic times, and there is an old print of Isleham Hall to be seen at the Free Library in Cambridge representing three sides of a quadrangle, which looks as though it might at some time or another have been occupied by people of great importance.

Besides the clunch and peat already mentioned, our county produces gravel, sand, gault, silt, and chalk.

Snailwell, already mentioned in connection with the river or stream which flows through Fordham, had the honour of giving birth to one William Horn, who, in 1487, became Lord Mayor of London.

One might go on until one had outreached the limits of the neighbourhood, and there is already a fear of one having become tedious. But should this little history meet the eye of any native who may have travelled beyond the silvery mists and golden sunsets of his own Fenland, the writer has a hope that it may not have been written in vain. Or should by any possibility a native return after a banishment "*à la* Robinson Crusoe" upon some desert island, say, for about half a century or so, we think among the changes

that have taken place in our midst, the change in the christian names given to our children will be forcible indeed to him.

With the old people passing off life's scene, will depart many of the Bible names which characterised the baptisms of the long ago, and instead of Joseph, Mark, Job, the names of three old men who were brothers, Isaac, John, James, &c., there will be names marvellously suggestive of a certain class of fiction. The same may be said of the Elizabeths, the Marthas, and the Marys, the Sarahs and the Ruths — we must travel beyond Wicken and the neighbourhood in order to hear them at our baptisms.

But they will return sure enough when a wholesome and reactionary taste sets in.

And yet another thought ere we close this history—though it may seem already to have become unconscionably long. The women of England have made a great stride in learning and usefulness during this our own Victorian period, but women of Wicken, without great learning or scientific training, have left names behind them worthy of all praise.

Situate as the place is, from Soham four miles, the nearest town in which to find a doctor or a surgeon, three names rise up before the writer of women who in many a time of peril have risen to the occasion and lent such surgical skill as

may (under the guiding hand of Providence) have saved many a life ere a surgeon could be got upon the scene. These names are those of Jane Rowlinson, the amateur doctress and nurse of the Fen around Upware (already named in connection with Cambridge butter market), the late Mrs. Robert Cranwell, and the octogenarian, Elizabeth Bailey. "The world," says an historian, "knows nothing of its greatest men"—let this be applied to women.

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime ;
And departing leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time."

These women have left their footprints. Let future men and women, with their greater advantages, leave theirs as honourably, whether it be in the fields and paths of their own Fenland, or in the greater empire over which a woman has reigned for sixty years, a blessing in her own home and to her people, and an example to all rulers and the nations over whom they rule. For—

"Life is real ! Life is earnest !
And the grave is not its goal !
Dust thou art, to dust returnest !
Was not spoken of the soul !"

FINIS.

LIST OF PLANTS IN WICKEN FEN.

(As quoted from that of the late Professor Babington.)

Thalictrum flavum.	Hydrocotyle vulgarus.
Ranunculus heterophyllus.	Apium graveoleus.
R. Flammula.	Sium latifolium.
R. Lingua.	S. angustifolium.
R. Acris.	Cenanthe fistulosa.
R. Sceleratus.	CE. Lachenalii.
Caltha palustris.	E. Phellandrium.
Nymphaea alba.	Angelica sylvestris.
Nuphar lutea.	Peucedanum palustre.
Erysimum cheiranthoides.	Galium uliginosum.
Armoracia amphibia-oleus.	G. palustre.
*Viola stagnina.	G. elongatum.
Lychnis Flos cuculi.	Valeriana sambucifolia.
Sagina nodosa.	V. dioica.
Stellaria Glauca.	Eupatorium Cannabinum.
Malachium aquaticum.	Senecio aquaticus.
Hypericum quadrangulum.	S. paludosis.
Lynum catharticum.	Centaurea nigra.
Rhamnus catharticus.	Carduus palustris.
Vicia Cracca.	C. pratensis.
Lathyrus palustris.	Ihrincia hirta.
Spirea Ulmaria.	Menyanthus trifoliata.
Potentilla anserina.	Convolvulus sepium.
Comarum palustre.	Symphytum officinale.
Rubus Balfourianus.	Myosotis palustris.
Lythrum Salicaria.	Scrophularia-aquatica.
Epilobium hirsutum.	Pedicularis palustris.
Myriophyllum verticillatum.	Rhinanthus Cristagalli.
N. Spicatum.	Veronica Anagallis.
Hippurus vulgarus.	Mentha Aquatica.

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Lycopusenropæus.	P. plantagineus.
Scutellaria gulericulata.	P. heterophyllus.
Utricularia vulgaris.	P. lucens.
Hottonia palustris.	P. pectinatus.
L. nummularia.	*Schoenus nigricans.
Samolus Valerandi.	Cladium Mariscus.
Plantago lanceolata.	Scirpus cæspitotus.
Rumex Hydrolapathum.	Carex disticha.
Ceratophyllum demersum.	C. panicea.
Callibuche verna.	C. flava.
Salixcinerea.	C. CEdiri.
S. Caprea.	C. fulva.
S. fusca.	C. filiformis.
Hydrocharus Morcusranæ.	C. Glaucia.
Stratiotes aloides.	C. hirta.
*Oorchis incarnata.	C. paludosa.
*Iris Bendacorus.	C. Riparia.
Juncus effusus.	Alopeairus geniculatis.
J. oblusiflorus.	Calam agrostis lanceolata.
J. obtusiflorus.	Phragmites communis.
J. lamprocarpus.	Agrostis canina.
J. Supinus.	Holcus lunatus.
*Lugula multiflora.	Arrhenatherum avenaceum.
Alisma Plantago.	Molinia cærulea.
A. ranunculoides.	Poa trivialis.
Sagittaria sagittifolia.	Glyceria aquatica.
Butonus umbellatus.	G. fluitans.
Iriglochin palustre.	Briza media.
Sparganium ramosum.	Dactylus glomerata.
S. Minimum.	Festuca pratensis.
Lemna trisulea.	Lastrea Thelypteris.
L. minor.	Ophisglossum vulgatum.
L. polierhiza.	Chara vulgaris.
L. Gibba.	C. hispida.
Potamogelum natans.	

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